

# Scientific Research Capacity in Cameroon

An Assessment of IFS Support

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in collaboration with:  
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# IFS

The International Foundation for Science, IFS, is an international, non-governmental organisation, founded in 1972. The mission of IFS is to contribute to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to conduct relevant and high quality research on the sustainable management of biological resources. This may involve the study of physical, chemical, and biological processes, as well as relevant social and economic aspects, important in the conservation, production, and renewable utilisation of the natural resources base.

The strategy to achieve this objective is to identify young, talented scientists who have the potential for becoming the future research leaders and lead scientists in their nations, and to effectively support them in their early careers.

The primary form of support, and the entry point to the “IFS system”, is the small grant awarded in international competition. Once a grantee, the researcher can be supported in many other ways - invited to workshops, purchasing services, travel grants, training, scientific contacts, participation in networks, publishing reports, etc. More information about the activities of IFS, as well as research grant application forms, are available at [www.ifs.se](http://www.ifs.se).

To date, more than 3,500 researchers in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean have been awarded research grants by IFS.

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## Table of Contents

Preface .....	5
1. Introduction .....	7
1.1 Measuring the impact of IFS activities	8
1.2. The components of the MESIA study in Cameroon	8
1.3 The content of the report	10
1.4 Acknowledgements	10
2. Science and technology in Cameroon: an overview .....	11
2.1. Building the national research system	11
2.2. Human resources and budgets	13
2.3. Tensions, initiatives and changes in the profession	19
2.4. Institutional innovations and new forms of partnership	22
2.5 Encouraging steps	24
3. Applicants and grantees in Cameroon .....	27
3.1 The application process	27
3.2 Applications and success rates	27
3.3 The grantees	28
3.4 Conclusion	29
4. Characteristics of the surveyed IFS grantee population .....	31
5. Research conditions .....	33
5.1 Grantee livelihoods	33
5.2 Funding sources	35
5.3 Main factors limiting grantees' research	35
5.4 Communication and scientific contacts	35
5.5 Conclusion	38
6. Publication Outputs .....	39
6.1 Local science and international mainstream science	39
6.2 Bibliometric study of grantees in Cameroon	40
6.3 Conclusion	44

7. IFS research project completion .....	45
8. Grantee advancement and mobility .....	47
8.1 Academic progression	47
8.2 Promotion	47
8.3 Mobility	48
8.4 Conclusion	50
9. An assessment of IFS support .....	51
9.1 Relative importance of IFS support	51
9.2 An assessment of IFS support	51
9.3 Conclusion	54
10. Science, society and grantees' career goals .....	55
11. Conclusions and lessons learned .....	57
11.1 Success and failure among applicants	57
11.2 Research conditions	58
11.3 Communication and team research	58
11.4 Incentives	59
11.5 The brain drain	59
11.6 Grantees' assessment of IFS	59
References .....	60
Appendix 1: The questionnaire .....	61
Appendix 2: List of Figures .....	67
Appendix 3: List of Tables .....	68
Appendix 4: List of Boxes .....	69
Appendix 5: Acronyms and abbreviations .....	70

## Preface

The International Foundation for Science (IFS) is an international NGO offering competitive research grants to promising young scientists in their early career. Developing country researchers are eligible to apply and IFS relies on a wide network of Scientific Advisers who assess the applications. Decisions on funding are made twice yearly and the value of the grant may be up to USD 12,000, the bulk of it being used to purchase scientific equipment and supplies. IFS signs a contract both with the grantee and the research institute or university department where the work is conducted. Thus, the grant benefits not only the individual grantee but also her/his institution.

Over the three decades during which IFS has functioned as an international research council, more than 5,000 grants have been awarded, of which one third have been allocated to researchers in Africa. Cameroonian scientists were among the first IFS grantees in Africa, and altogether 83 researchers have been awarded at least one research grant.

In order to measure the impact of IFS support for developing country scientists, a monitoring programme has been established at the IFS secretariat in Stockholm. This report is the fourth study investigating the research conditions of IFS grantees (previous studies dealt with Mexico, Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa in general).

This study was written by Deputy Director Jacques Gaillard and Scientific Programme Coordinator Eren Zink. The bulk of data is derived from a questionnaire to all grantees and information in the IFS' database, supplemented by interviews with a sample of them, as well as field visits to selected research institutions.

The findings of the report show that the scientific research landscape in Cameroon has eroded since the 1990's, but shows signs of recovery in recent years. Despite severe budget cuts over the past decade there exist a number of strong academic "islands" where quality science is produced. However, they are all dependent on funding from international sources.

The study shows that IFS grantees have done well academically and achieved important positions in the scientific community. The brain drain factor among former grantees is extremely low, only three are working in North America, while another four have moved to other African countries. This indicates that the IFS approach to support young scientists in their early career facilitates a scientific career in the home country.

The success rate of Cameroonian grantees is comparatively high, close to 30%, as compared to 20% among African grantees in general. The study analyses the reasons for the high success rate and concludes that there Cameroonian

scientists have intensive contacts with each other and subject their draft research proposals to internal peer review before sending the applications to IFS.

Women scientists are under represented among IFS grantees in Cameroon – they constitute only half the percentage of women scientists in the population of scientists in Cameroon. This indicates that IFS should further explore why women are not better represented. Do they have more fragile networks of support, are they poorly represented in IFS fields or, due to commitments to family and children that delay their research careers, are they too old to qualify for IFS support?

As IFS looks to expand its support to researchers in the least developed countries, women constitute a category whose participation in the IFS small grants programme could be significantly increased. In order to see such an increase, IFS will further investigate why women are poorly represented among applicants from some countries.

The study reports on how IFS is perceived among grantees in Cameroon. IFS received the most positive assessments for its core activity: the manner in which it administers its research grants. A majority of respondents graded the IFS as excellent in this regard and all respondents were at least satisfied. The IFS selection process, the service whereby IFS purchases and ships research equipment, monitoring and follow-up of research projects, and contact with the IFS staff also received high marks from grantees in Cameroon.

Stockholm, October 2003  
Michael Ståhl  
Director  
International Foundation for Science



## 1. Introduction

The overall mission of the International Foundation for Science (IFS) is to support researchers from the developing world early in their careers to conduct research on the management, use, and conservation of biological resources. The core of IFS support is financial, and comes in the form of twice renewable research grants with maximum values of USD 12,000. The major budget items covered by grants are equipment, literature, fieldwork support and supplies. In some cases, salaries of research assistants and technical personnel can be covered. IFS provides opportunities for grantees to meet and interact with other scientists, and travel grants permit grantees to attend scientific meetings or to visit other research institutes or universities for training or collaboration. IFS organises its own workshops as well: to date close to 100 meetings related to the IFS Granting Programme have been held. IFS is also active in promoting and stimulating scientific networks at a regional and international level. Furthermore, IFS has an award scheme with a cash prize that recognises grantees for noteworthy achievements associated with research projects supported by IFS. All of these efforts are intended to enhance grantees' credibility as scientists and to enable them to become established and recognised in national and international scientific circles.

IFS has been an actively engaged with the Cameroonian science and technology community since 1977. The National Office for Scientific Research and Technology (ONAREST)<sup>1</sup> became an Affiliated Organisation of IFS in that year, and the year after the first two grants were awarded to Cameroonian scientists working at the National Agricultural Research Institute (today IRAD). One of them, Dr. Ayuk-Takem, a maize geneticist, is today director of IRAD after having served as Minister of Science and Technology in the early 1990s. Representatives from Cameroon regularly attend IFS Assemblies and workshops, and IFS staff frequently visit Cameroonian universities and research institutes.

During 1974-2002, IFS supported close to 3400 scientists in 99 developing countries, of which more than a third (1231) were in Africa and 84 in Cameroon. Of 40 recipient countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Cameroon has the third largest number of IFS grantees and is preceded only by Nigeria and Kenya (Figure 1). Given the relative size of its national scientific community<sup>2</sup>, this third position for Cameroon is to be expected.

Up to December 2002, IFS approved altogether 139 grants to 86 scientists in Cameroon. Two never started their research projects and their grants were consequently withdrawn. The total number of scientists supported by IFS in Cameroon up to the end of 2002 is therefore 84. Of these 84, six are deceased today.

The total value of research grants awarded to scientists in Cameroon (not including travel grants to attend scientific meetings and to visit research institutes abroad) equals approximately 1.4 million USD. In addition, IFS has organised eight workshops in Cameroon. Due to a particular char-

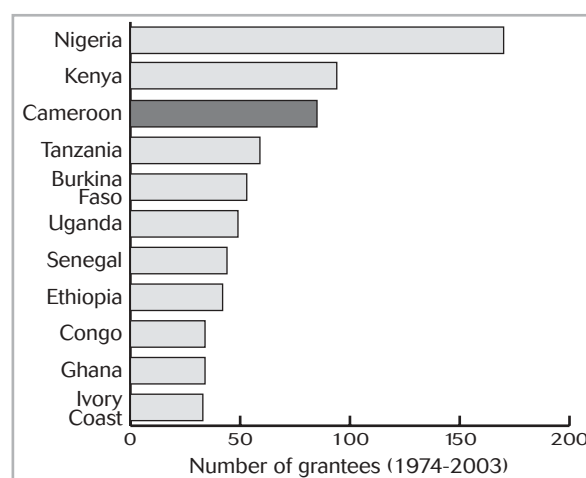


Figure 1  
Top recipient countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (1974-2002)

acteristic, namely bilingualism, Cameroon is a very attractive country to organise regional meetings for French speaking and English speaking grantees in this part of the world. The first was held in 1979 in Buea on yams (*Dioscorea* spp.). Many scientists working on Yams in Western and Central Africa met in Buea for the first time thanks to IFS. More recently, IFS organised together with local and international partners the International Workshop on Purchasing, Servicing and Maintenance of Scientific Equipment in Western Africa in Buea in November 2002 and the Food Africa Conference in Yaoundé in May 2003. The list of all meetings organised by IFS in Cameroon is given in Box 1. At the beginning of 2003, 34 Cameroonian scientists continued to receive support from IFS.

### 1.1 Measuring the impact of IFS activities

To better evaluate the impact of IFS activities, a Monitoring and Evaluation System for Impact Assessment (MESIA) was established at the IFS Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden. The main objectives of MESIA are to assess the achievements of the grantees and the effect that grants and other forms of support provided by IFS have had on grantees' academic and institutional career. A number of complementary approaches are used to achieve this aim including interviews and questionnaire surveys intended primarily for IFS grantees, bibliometric studies on scientific output of IFS grantees and national impact studies such as the present one for Cameroon. A conceptual framework and a standardised set of guidelines have been elaborated in order to allow international comparisons and to involve IFS staff and as many IFS Affiliated Organisations as possible (Gaillard, 2000).

The first MESIA questionnaire survey was designed for IFS grantees and beneficiaries of the INCO-DEV programme of the European Commission in Africa. The results of this survey, highlighting the conditions and the constraints for scientists in Africa today, have been analysed and published (Gaillard and Furó Tullberg, 2001). In addition, country case studies have also been conducted and completed for Mexico, Tanzania, and Cameroon (this report). The Mexican country case study was published in December, 2001 (Gaillard *et al*, 2001) and the Tanzanian country case study was published in October 2002 (Gaillard *et al*, 2002).

#### Box 1

##### Workshops organised by IFS in Cameroon

- 1978. Buea. Yams/Ignames.
- 1985. Douala. Development of Indigenous Fermented Foods and Food Technology in Africa.
- 1989. Bamenda. Small Ruminant Research.
- 1989. Garoua. Cereals of the Semi-arid Tropics.
- 1993. Yaoundé. *Comment rédiger une demande de financement de recherche.*
- 1994. Yaoundé. *Comment rédiger une demande de financement de recherche.*
- 1994. Yaoundé. Use, maintenance and repair of scientific equipment.
- 2002. Buea. International workshop on purchasing, servicing and maintenance of scientific equipments in western Africa.
- 2003. Yaoundé. Food Africa Conference (co-organised)

### 1.2. The components of the MESIA study in Cameroon

This study was initiated during a visit to Cameroon by IFS (Jacques Gaillard) in November 1999 during which interviews were conducted in Bamenda, Buea, Douala, Dschang, Ekona, Fombot, Limbe, Njombe and Yaoundé in a variety of institutions specialised mainly in the biological and agricultural sciences, and, to a lesser extent, nutrition and health. IFS grantees in Cameroon were also contacted in February-March 2003 to update available information on their whereabouts and careers. A follow-up final visit was also made by Jacques Gaillard in March 2003 to conduct additional interviews and update information on science and technology (S&T) activities in Cameroon. The present study covers the time period from 1974 until 2002, and includes the 84 grantees that participated in the IFS Programme during that time. While these grantees are working in some 8 research institutions throughout the country, two-third of them are found in the top two recipient institutions: the *Institut de Recherche Agricole pour*

Institution	City	No. of Grantees
Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD)	Nkolbisson/Yaoundé and 6 other cities	28
University of Yaoundé I	Yaoundé	27
University of Dschang	Dschang	16
University of Ngaoundéré	Ngaoundéré	6
University of Buea	Buea	3
Others		4
<b>Total</b>		<b>84</b>

Table 1  
Top recipient institutions in Cameroon (1974-2002)

*le Développement* (IRAD) and the University of Yaoundé I (see table 1).

The study comprises five main components: an overview of S&T in Cameroon, a retrospective analysis of IFS applications, applicants and grantees, a questionnaire survey addressed to the IFS grantees in Cameroon, a bibliometric study of their scientific production, and finally interviews of Cameroonian grantees. These five components are briefly presented below. The period under review for IFS applications, applicants and grantees is 1974-2002 and the period of reference for the questionnaire survey and the bibliometric study is 1974-1999.

### 1.2.1 Overview of science and technology activities in Cameroon

The main objective of the overview, presented in Chapter 2, is to describe the Cameroonian S&T environment. The topics covered include science development and policy, the institutional landscape, the conditions under which scientists work, the new initiatives and institutions, and IFS grantees' position in the Cameroonian S&T system. Organisations and individuals interested in working in Cameroon on strengthening science capacity will find it to be an informative and detailed introduction that can be read independently of the rest of the report

### 1.2.2 Analysis of applications, applicants and IFS grantees

A key component of the study, is the analysis of applicants' and grantees' success rates, and distri-

bution, and grantees' project duration, quality of submitted reports, and academic and institutional promotion.

### 1.2.3 Questionnaire survey

As part of the "Questionnaire survey of African scientists", questionnaires were sent to 59 Cameroonian scientists in Cameroon in March 2000. A reminder was sent in June 2000 to those who had not responded. 48 questionnaires (or 81% response rate) were completed and returned to IFS.

### 1.2.4 Bibliometric study on scientific production

A bibliometric study was also carried out to determine the effect of IFS support on the trends in the nature and volume of the scientific output of the IFS grantees. Of 66 grantees at the end of 1999, 49 sent publication lists containing a total of 972 publications (all document types). This 71% rate of response is considered to be very satisfactory (see chapter 6). The results of the bibliometric study are presented in chapter 6.

### 1.2.5 Interviews

Following a series of interviews in Yaoundé with the Ministers in charge of Research and Higher Education as well as with several heads of institutions, 27 interviews of IFS grantees were carried out in Cameroon in October and November 2000. Qualitative information from the interviews have been used throughout the report to illustrate the

impact of IFS support on the grantees' working environment and career.

### 1.3 The content of the report

The report is organized in 11 chapters including this introduction and the conclusion with cross references between the chapters. Although an effort has been made to organize the chapters in a logical order, they can be read separately and/or in a different order. Chapter 11 summarises the main findings of the study and lessons learned.

### 1.4 Acknowledgements

In the course of the fieldwork for this study, IFS benefited from the support of the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD) that provided a car and a driver that greatly facilitated journeys

within the country. Furthermore, Jacques Gaillard was seconded to the IFS Secretariat by IRD. IRD's support is gratefully acknowledged. Jean Nya-Ngatchou, Research Director Emeritus from Cameroon, assisted in gathering and updating statistics on S&T activities in Cameroon. Hocine Khelifaoui participated in a complementary study on Science in Cameroon at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The interviews he carried out with scientists in social, medical and basic sciences, although not directly relevant to the IFS grantees' work, were very useful to corroborate or invalidate some of our results. Henrik Hovmöller is the architect of the IFS database and provided some important data for this report. Brian Porter helped with the layout of the report. The backbone of this report comes from the Cameroonian grantees themselves. Without their answers to the questionnaire, and the many enlightening discussions during the interviews, this report could not have been written. Everybody's contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

#### Chapter Notes

<sup>1</sup> ONAREST has successfully been transformed in different bodies to become today the Ministry of Science and Technology (see Chapter 2).

<sup>2</sup> In a recent study (Gaillard, Waast and Hassan, 2002), it is estimated that the number of researchers (Full Time Equivalent) in Nigeria, Kenya and Cameroon were respectively 3,000, 1,000 and 800.

## 2. Science and technology in Cameroon: an overview

This chapter provides an overview of the development and current status of science and technology (S&T) in Cameroon. The topics covered include science policy, the institutional landscape, the conditions under which scientists work, the new initiatives and institutions, and IFS grantees' positions in the Cameroonian S&T system.

### 2.1. Building the national research system

Like in most African countries south of the Sahara, "modern science" was introduced in Cameroon during western colonisation. In the beginning, scientific research in Cameroon was carried out by explorers, Christian missionaries, colonial administrators, officers of the German and French armies, as well as isolated researchers and academics. These researchers conducted their investigations in areas as diverse as botany, zoology, archaeology, history, sociology, human and physical geography, geology, etc. In 1960, when the Cameroonian State became independent, it inherited an appreciable research infrastructure established during the colonial times, but the number of trained Cameroonian researchers was very small<sup>1</sup>.

Collaboration between Cameroon and France prevented the interruption of research activities during the transition from colonial possession to independent state. The running costs of the institutes were taken over by the Cameroonian authorities, but the salaries of the researchers, who were mostly French scientists, were provided by France. This enabled the emerging Cameroonian State, in the beginning, to concentrate its resources on higher education and training. Research remained essentially agricultural, and focused on plant breeding, crop protection and the improvement of agricultural systems. Research interest in subsistence crops was just starting. These had been neglected before, all attention having been turned towards cash crops for export.

#### 2.1.1. From higher education to research

Research was considered a priority in the first years of independence, but the first national investments were actually made in the sector of higher education. Many schools and universities were founded before any new research institute was created. Thus, the first institute created by the new state, in 1960, was the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie* (ENSA). Created with American aid funds, this institute was later transferred to Dschang in 1977 to become part of the newly founded University Centre. It was also within this University Centre that the National Institute for Rural Development (*Institut National de Développement Rural*, INADER) was created in 1988. The ENSA later became the Faculty of Agronomy and Agricultural Sciences (*Faculté d'Agronomie et des Sciences Agricoles*, FASA). The University of Yaoundé was founded in 1961, followed by the University Centres of Douala, Ngaoundere and Dschang.

In 1962 the Council for Scientific Research was founded and instructed to report directly to the President of the Republic. In spite of the creation of this council, no real change in research policy occurred during the first ten years of independence from 1960 to 1970. Based on Franco-Cameroonian agreements, research remained under French leadership and was conducted within the French institutes established in Cameroon. This leadership was reinforced following the Franco-Cameroonian co-operation agreements of 1963 on scientific research and technology. The 1960s were thus mainly years of expansion of higher education and training. It was not until the 1970s that the first public research institutes were created (see Box 2).

At the national level, the institutionalization process (see Box 3) led to the creation of the National Council for Scientific Research and Technology (ONAREST). This institution, placed under the Ministry for Regional Development, became operational in 1974. The creation of ONAREST was also

## Box 2

## Creation of the first Cameroonian research institutes

1972: creation of the National Agricultural Research Institute (Centre National de Recherche Agronomique) at Ekona in the South-western province.

1974: creation of the Institute for Medical Research and Medicinal Plants (Institut de Recherches Médicales et d'Etudes des Plantes Médicinales) in Yaoundé.

1974: creation of the National Centre for Agricultural Machinery (Centre National d'Etudes et d'Expérimentation du Machinisme Agricole), by the Ministry of Agriculture.

1983: creation of the National Veterinary Laboratory, by the Ministry for Animal Production.

accompanied by the foundation of nine research institutes.

### 2.1.2. ONAREST: 1974 - 1978

With the establishment of ONAREST in 1974, Cameroon acquired a research management coordinating body as well as a central instrument for unified management. The latter was required by decree of the newly established Unified Republic of Cameroon, the creation of which put an end to the federal regime in 1972. In view of the federal constitution of Cameroon, which at the time of independence consisted of the French-speaking eastern Cameroon and the English-speaking western Cameroon, it also made sense that research be placed under federal authority.

The mission of the ONAREST was to co-ordinate scientific research throughout the whole territory, and to act as adviser to the government on scientific issues. This unified central management compensated for the nearly autonomous way in which research functioned in the field. Indeed, in western Cameroon, research was essentially co-ordinated by the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), aided by French organizations like the Research Institute on Oils and Oleaginous Plants (*Institut de Recherche sur les Huiles et Oléagineux*, IRHO). In the French-speaking part of Cameroon research was conducted within French research organizations. As reported by its director at the time, the ONAREST mainly co-ordinated activities of the French research institutes.

In the meantime, an increasing number of Cameroonian scholars were trained at national universities and other institutions of higher education and keen to take responsibility for research activities. The rapidly growing local capacity for research led to the review of existing co-operation agreements with France. After some months' negotiation, the revision of the agreement texts was finalized in February 1974 by the Franco-Cameroonian agreement on cultural co-operation. In parallel, French research structures underwent an internal reorganisation, demonstrated by the creation of the *Groupe-ment d'Etude et de Recherche pour le Développement de l'Agronomie Tropicale* (GERDAT, later to become CIRAD). This structure brought together French tropical agricultural research institutions, in different African countries, including Cameroon.

The newly established ONAREST was confronted with a number of challenges, the most difficult of which being to convince different ministries to hand over the responsibilities they had held until recently to the new organization ONAREST. Another challenge was to ensure the continuity of the various activities it had inherited, and to negotiate the transfer conditions of assets and personnel with the old French institutions. The ONAREST integrated all the French institutes in Cameroon, including the ORSTOM, the Pasteur Institute and the French Institute of Geography, which were in a way nationalized. At its creation, the ONAREST thus inherited around ten French research institutes active in different fields. A third

## Box 3

## The science policy institutionalisation process and the creation of ONAREST

1965-1974: creation of the National Office for Scientific Research and Technology (Office National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique, ONAREST). ONAREST became fully operational in 1974.

1969: creation of a Department of Human Resources and of Scientific Research within the Ministry for Planning and Regional Development.

1971: The Department for Human Development and Scientific Research becomes the Permanent Secretariat for Science and Technology.

1974: creation of the Council for Higher Education, Science and Technology. The task of this body was to advise the government on higher education and scientific research policy issues.

challenge was inherent to the organization of research itself within the ONAREST. Running the nine research institutes proved much more costly than anticipated and their administration much more complex.

In order to improve the capacity of ONAREST to respond to these challenges, the government reorganized the ONAREST in March 1976. Among the changes was the reduction of number of research institutions from nine to five, as well as the size of their respective missions (Box 4).

### 2.1.3. From the DGRST to the Ministry of Science and Technology

In 1979 the ONAREST was transformed into a “General Authority of Science and Technology”, *Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique* (DGRST), which answered directly to the Prime Minister. This change reflected a considerable gain in political status for scientific research, which was soon after to be given its own Ministry.

The DGRST was responsible for the management of research in Cameroon until 1984, when it was integrated into the higher education sector: the reorganization of the government in February 1984 led to the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, which took over the entire responsibilities of the DGRST in matters of research<sup>2</sup>. Two years later, in 1986, this department also integrated the computer technology services and changed its name to Ministry of Higher Education, Computing and Scientific Research<sup>3</sup>. After being under the same Ministry for a relatively long period of time (from 1984 to 1992), research and higher education were separated again. In 1992, the Ministry of Higher Education, Computing and Scientific Research was split into two: the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Ministry of Science and Technology, the latter entrusted to Dr. Ayuk Takem, at the time Director of the Institute for Agricultural Research, *Institut de Recherche Agricole* (IRA) and also former IFS grantee.

Researchers and academics alike find difficulties in coming to terms with the separation between research and higher education. For the researchers of the research institutes, this separation makes graduate training more difficult to access, as well as the participation in doctoral work and the supervision of PhD students. In more general terms, it makes scientific co-operation with their colleagues

#### Box 4

The reorganisation of ONAREST in five research institutes

The Institute for Agricultural and Forestry Research, *Institut de Recherche Agricole et Forestière* (IRAF), based in Ekona, took over the activities of the ICP and the ICVT.

The Institute of Zootechnical Research, *Institut de Recherche Zootechnique* (IRZ), which continued to be based in Ngaoundere, replaced the IZPV.

The Institute of Medical Research and Medicinal Plants, *Institut de Recherche Médicale et d'Etudes des Plantes Médicinales* (IMPM).

The Institute for Research in Technology, Industry and the Subsoil, *Institut de Recherches sur les Techniques, l'Industrie et le Sous-sol* (IRTISS), integrated the activities of the IRT and the IHGM.

The Institute of Human Sciences, *Institut des Sciences Humaines* (ISH), replaced the INE.

more complicated. Any collaboration undertaken with the university is nowadays the sole result of informal contacts that researchers and academics form outside of the institutions. Many of the interviewed researchers qualify the relationship between universities and research institutes in terms of “conflicting solidarity”: “solidarity”, because research had no personnel of its own upon decolonization, and the State gave the university the task of training scientists that could later run it, “conflicting”, because the leaders trained at the university continue to be evaluated according to a system that does not take into account the time spent on research activities.

## 2.2. Human resources and budgets

### 2.2.1. Rise and fall of State research

Research in Cameroon received considerable State support until the middle of the 1980s. In 1974, the government established a funding system for scientific research and technology when the ONAREST was created. At that time, Cameroon was among the African countries having invested most in research. The early 1980s were prosperous years in research; according to researchers interviewed,

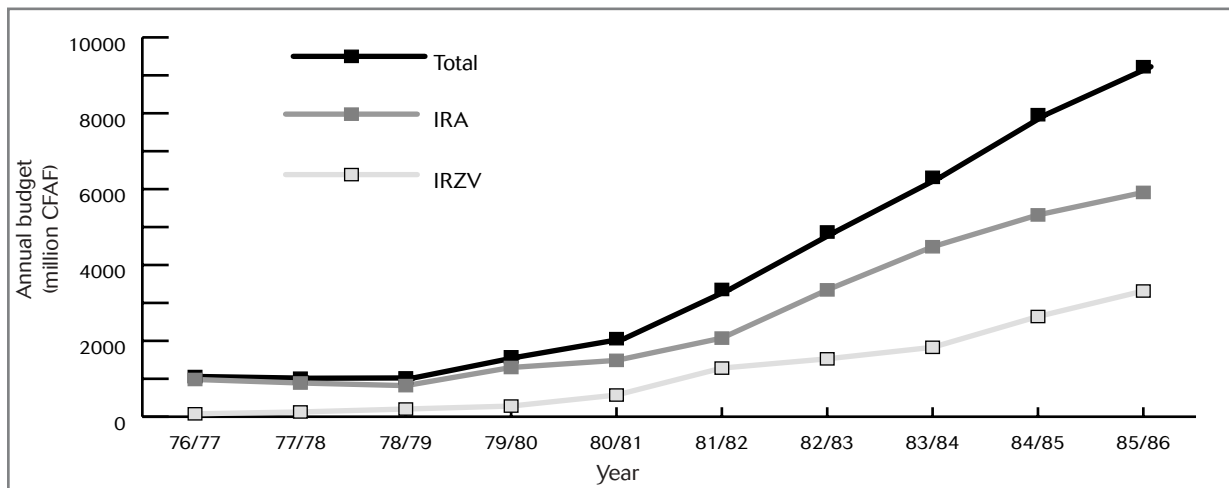


Figure 2  
Budget of IRA and IRZV in millions FCFA (1976-1986)

funding available to researchers in Cameroon was comparable to French levels at that time.

The high funding levels were to a large extent due to revenues from petroleum, but there was also a genuine political will to train and have access to a scientific elite. It was during this period that the large majority of the Cameroonian scientific community was formed. Large investments in research were made by the government. These efforts are apparent in the funding levels given before the approaching crisis to institutes such as the IRA and the *Institut de Recherches Zootechniques et Vétérinaires* (IRZV) (Figure 2).

Within a ten year period, the total budget for the two institutes rose from slightly more than one billion CFA franc (CFAf) in 1976/1977 to 9.2 billion in 1985/1986. In addition to government subsidies, income from sales of the institutes' own animal and crop production should be added on, as well as income from laboratory analyses undertaken. During this period, research was carried out within programmes included in the five-year plans for development. Until 1985, each researcher worked within programmes defined beforehand by his or her research institute. The leadership of the institutes decided which research subjects the researchers should deal with. The means provided to carry out the research depended on the objectives set, and it was simply asked of the researcher to ensure that the plan was fulfilled.

Some researchers remember this prosperous period by certain outward signs noticeable by all: "at one time, the vehicles of the DGRST were so numerous in the capital that even children recognized

them". Others remember that some made good use of the advantages offered by the system without necessarily contributing to the advancement of science in return: "many researchers participated in programmes without publishing anything; they just collected their travel claims related to a given programme".

This period was also that of the development and subsequent establishment of the status of researcher<sup>4</sup>. The decree on the status of researchers, signed in July 1980, marked a significant step in the evolution of research in Cameroon. The new status of researcher proved extremely popular with the active researchers as well as with young graduates aspiring to a research career. Thanks to this status, research attracted a large number of candidates. In 1980-1981, 54 researchers were recruited, and 44 in 1981-1982. During those two years, around 30 researchers benefited from grants for specialization abroad. In 1982, Cameroon had 196 national researchers.

The remarkable increase in the number of national researchers during the 1980s (see Box 5) is partly explained by the establishment of the special status of researcher, which attracted even PhDs active in different ministerial departments to research. The status of researcher, decreed in a national context characterized by a small number of researchers and a poor understanding of the mission of researcher by the general public (for example his or her place in the civil service), had the advantage of clearly defining that a researcher is a professional devoting all his time to activities of scientific research. Furthermore, the status developed a sense of community spirit among the researchers above and across



## Box 5

The changing research community in Cameroon,  
1965-1987

The changes within the research community in Cameroon during the period 1965-1987 can be broadly characterized in three periods:

From 1965 to 1974: period during which the management of research structures was carried out by the French research institutes. The number of national researchers in the institutes for agronomic research of the ORSTOM increased from two in 1965 to 120 in 1974, while that of expatriates increased from 61 to 84.

From 1974 to 1980: period of the ONAREST. The number of national researchers in all the research institutes increased from 120 in 1974 to 152 in 1980.

From 1980 to 1987 (period when the DGRST was established and the status of researcher decreed, the number of national researchers increased from 152 in 1980 to 283 in 1983-1984 and to close to 400 in 1986-1987, while the number of expatriated researchers remained constant at around 82.

the diversity of disciplines. It also served to create a framework attractive enough for young university graduates to envisage a research career<sup>5</sup>.

The growth observed in the universities and research institutes during the 1980s was abruptly ended by an economic crisis. This led to a stop in recruitment, delays in the payment of salaries, the end of funding of research programmes and the erosion of motivation among researchers.

### 2.2.2. University growth and research stagnation

The development of public research infrastructure in Cameroon was accompanied, as mentioned above, by that of the universities. The development of the universities was stimulated by the necessity to respond to large increases in student numbers. Despite the efforts made in this direction since independence, the institutions of higher education cannot offer places to all the students wanting to enrol, even though the total number of students is relatively low (60 000 students for a population of 15 million people, or one in 250)<sup>6</sup>.

The creation in 1977 of four new university centres in Douala, Dschang, Buea and Ngaoundere did not fulfil the main intended objective of relieving the overcrowded University of Yaoundé. Whereas the Yaoundé campus was experiencing difficulties in taking care of the increasing number of students, the newly created university centres remained under-utilised. The University of Yaoundé continued to suffer from under-staffing, from weak internal and external performance, from the steering of the budget towards administrative offices, and from the lack of motivation of the university community as a whole. The reform of higher education in January 1993, resulting in, among other things, the establishment of six universities, aimed at giving the youths of Cameroon fresh academic and professional perspectives.

To illustrate the change in the number of students, it should be noted that the Federal University of Cameroon had 600 students enrolled when it started in 1962. In 1970, the number of students had risen to 7 000, in 1984 to 18 000, in 1990 to 32 000, and in 1991 to 45 000. However, from 1991 a continuous decrease in numbers occurred, going from 43,744 in 1992 to 38,674 in 1996. This short decline was followed by a spectacular increase, all but doubling the number of students in only three years (1996-1999). The change in number of students did not, however, follow the same pattern everywhere. The decrease was substantial within the two universities of the capital city (Yaoundé I and II) starting from the beginning of the 1990s until the academic year 1996/1997. During the same period, the number of students at the universities in the provinces increased steadily (see Figure 3).

While the student population increased, the economic and financial crisis affecting Cameroon since 1986/1987 forced big budget cuts to research. In addition, disbursements of the approved budgets for research were irregular and often incomplete, making research conditions difficult and delaying the payment of salaries to the personnel, civil servants and contract staff alike.

During the most difficult years, namely from 1990 to 1996, the research programmes dependent on national funds were stopped because of the delays in salary payment. Only the projects with external funding could be pursued more or less without disturbance. Figure 4 shows the funding collapse suffered by the Institute of Agronomic Research starting from 1986.

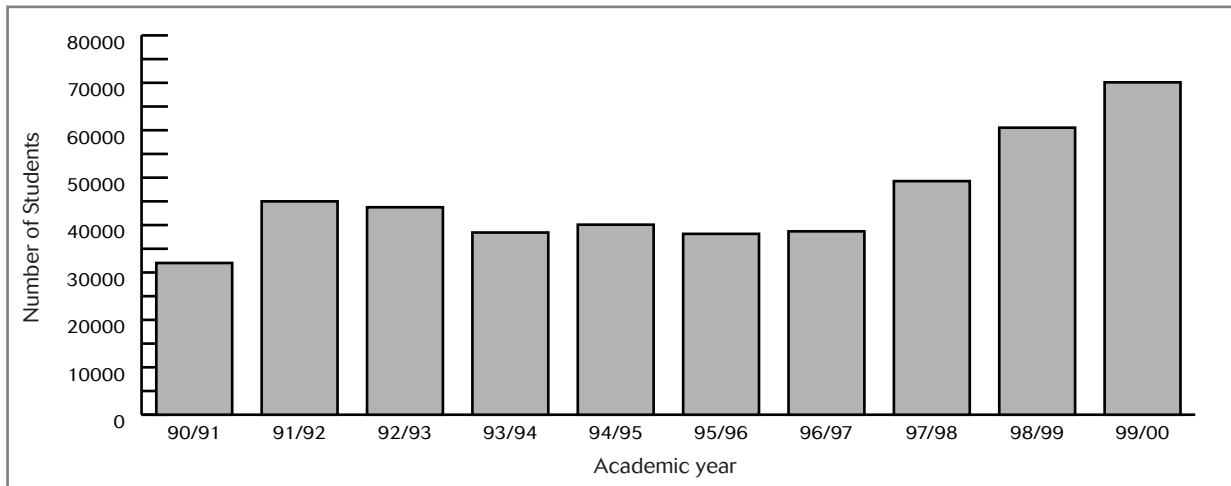


Figure 3  
Number of students in public higher education from 1990 to 2000

The amounts illustrating the situation at the universities show that the decrease in budgets became even more accentuated between 1992 and 1999 (Figure 5).

State financial support for the University of Yaoundé (which was divided in 1993 to become Yaoundé I and Yaoundé II) decreased by almost 90% between 1991 and 1999. While there were small increases to the four universities in the provinces, these increases did not match the reductions at the University of Yaoundé. Among the universities in the provinces, the University of Douala profited most from the budget increases starting in 1998/1999, its budget having gone from 898 million to 1.7 billion CFAf. However, this increase involved running costs and not investments, which, on the contrary, decreased. Furthermore, for all of the universities, if one considers the shrink-

ing mean budget per student (Figure 6), it becomes apparent that the increases did not keep pace with the increased numbers of students.

In addition to diminishing the funding available to universities, the economic crisis prevalent in Cameroon since 1986/1987 caused the allocation of public subsidies to become irregular. Often approved funds were not released, and only the salaries were paid to the researchers and teachers, sometimes with many months' delay.

From 1987 onwards, recruitment committees for researchers no longer assembled regularly, and recruitment became rarer. Thus, the number of national researchers stagnated until the beginning of the 1990s and then started to diminish, as departures due to retirement were no longer compensated by new recruitment. In addition, the

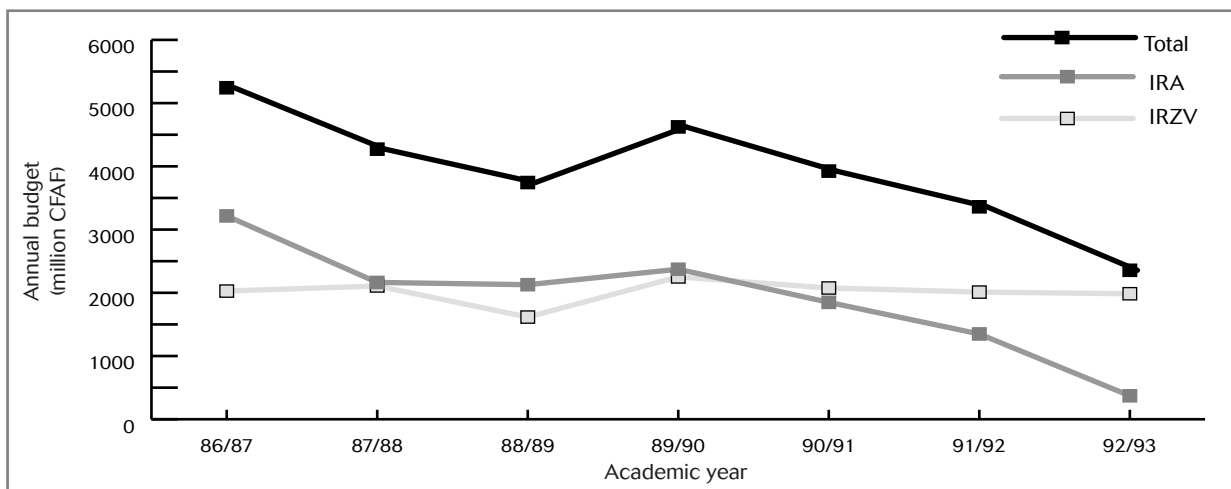


Figure 4  
Budget of the IRA and IRZV in millions of CFAF (1986-1993)  
Source: Restructuration de la recherche agricole (1993)

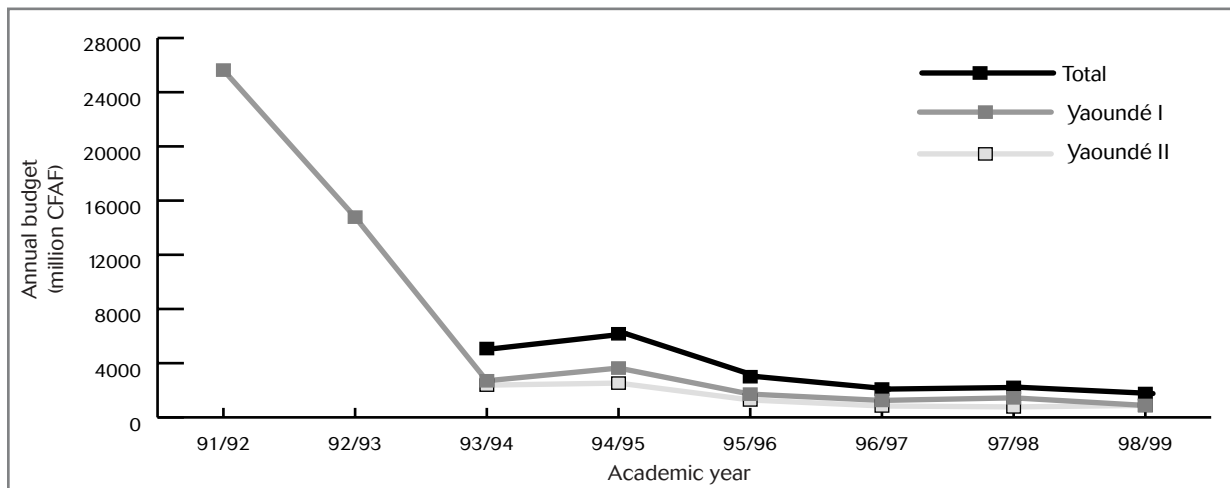


Figure 5  
Budgets of the universities of Yaoundé I and II (1991 to 1999)

financial constraints of the institutes also meant that many researchers resigned from their positions. For example, the researchers within the IRAD numbered 248 in 1992, but only 198 in 2003. The result is that the researchers of the institutes have become progressively older, and very few of the research officers at the IRAD are today below 40 years of age (see Box 6 for a more detailed look at IRAD and the Faculty of Science at the University of Yaoundé I).

During the economic crisis, political tensions also appeared in Cameroon that imposed further challenges and risks for researchers. A significant outcome of the political situation was the dissolution of the institute of Human Sciences with its four research centres: the centre for anthropological research, the centre for geographical research, the centre for research in demographics and the centre

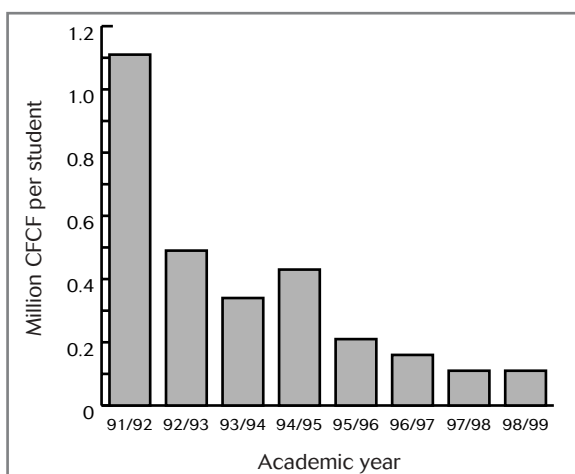


Figure 6  
Mean budget per student in the public universities in Cameroon in millions CFAF

for research in economics and social sciences. Only cartography survived to become the future National Institute of Cartography.

Despite the 5% GDP growth of the last few years, this upswing has not had repercussions for research budgets. While this may indicate that research is no longer considered an important priority by the authorities when it comes to budget allocation, it may also be explained by the fact that the accumulated national debt continues to handicap public finances greatly, limiting investment capacities to a large extent.

In short, the financial crisis has resulted in a continual shrinkage of the State subsidies to the research institutes, causing:

- The indefinite postponement of most research projects funded nationally.
- The progressive depletion of the plant and animal gene pool.
- The lack of work for researchers and technicians, whose salaries have, furthermore, not been paid for several months.
- The many unpaid bills for equipment and consumables.
- The worsening of scientific and technical potential, in particular of the infrastructure, which can no longer be adequately maintained.
- The lack of running water and electricity in certain centres and research stations.

## Box 6

## The shrinking of a highly qualified research community: examples

As would be the case for most African countries, it proved to be problematic to access accurate and up-to-date statistics on the number, age and qualifications of the overall scientific community in Cameroon. However, through the active collaboration of former IFS grantees, we were able to get information on the age and highest degree of scientists at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I and at the Agricultural Research Institute for Development (IRAD). Altogether, they amount to some 400 scientists and are representative of the two main institutional populations of scientists in Cameroon: higher education system and research institutes.

Information gathered indicates clearly that the scientists in Cameroon (particularly at the university) are highly trained. Nearly all researchers (96%) at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Yaoundé have a PhD (or equivalent) or a Doctorat d'Etat<sup>1</sup> (see Table A). It should however be noted here that the University of Yaoundé is the oldest university in Cameroon and it is likely that the scientific staff of the more recently established universities may be slightly younger and have slightly less academic training. Meanwhile, about one-third of the scientists at IRAD have a PhD (or equivalent).

Highest degree	University of Yaoundé I		IRAD		% of all researchers
	No. of researchers	Percentage of researchers	No. of researchers	Percentage of researchers	
BSc/Engineer	0	0 %	38	18.5%	9%
MSc	2	1%	77	38%	18%
DEA/DESS	8	3%	18	9%	6%
PhD	178	76%	69	34%	56%
Doctorat d'Etat	48	20%	1	0.5%	11%
Total	232		198		

Table A

Highest degrees held by researchers at IRAD and University of Yaoundé I (Faculty of Sciences only)

The scientists at IRAD obtained their highest degrees in 14 different countries: Cameroon, France, United States and United Kingdom being the most common (see Table B). Except for the neighbouring Nigeria where 16 scientists from IRAD got their highest degrees, very few such degrees were awarded in other African countries.

<sup>1</sup> The Doctorat d'Etat is an inheritance from the French system. Although it has been abolished in France, it is still currently in force in Cameroon and in many French speaking African countries. It is the highest university degree delivered often 10-15 years after the Doctorat in recognition of an outstanding academic work and career.

The crisis and tensions outlined above have both eroded the importance of the profession of researcher in Cameroon and created a extremely challenging environment in which Cameroonian researchers have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for survival and innovation of new initiatives.

### 2.2.3 Turning towards external funding

Prior to 1987, the state financed between 85% and 95% of research activities (including salaries). However, during the period 1987-1993, the percentage of foreign funding rose to as much as 39%. The largest funding contributions came from the World Bank (mainly in the form of loans), the *Fonds d'Aide à la Coopération* (FAC), the *Caisse*

*Centrale de Coopération Economique* (CCCE), the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA, today DFID), the European Union and the German GTZ.

The crisis began to establish itself in 1987, then, as shown by the above curves, worsen and widen in the beginning of the 1990s. This period was described by the researchers interviewed as a "descent into Hell". The crisis put a violent brake on research. In most research sectors, shortages became the rule, and not a single programme could be carried out without external funds. These funds were targeted to national programmes (this is the case of the *Coopération Française*, the World Bank, the Overseas Development Administration, the German Agency for Technical Co-operation, and the USAID<sup>7</sup>), the strengthening of research teams

Box 6  
(continued)

Country	Number of degrees	Country	Number of degrees
Cameroon	46	South Africa	2
France	35	Ghana	2
United States	29	Former Soviet Union	2
United Kingdom	27	Canada	1
Nigeria	16	Ivory Coast	1
The Netherlands	9	Denmark	1
Belgium	9	Unknown	18

Table B  
Countries in which IRAD scientists obtained their highest degrees

Given the scarcity of recruitment (particularly at IRAD) during the last 10 years, few of them are 40 years or below 40 years (see Table C). The youngest scientists were respectively 31 and 33 at the Faculty of Sciences and at IRAD at the beginning of 2003. The most important age group is between 40 and 49: respectively 50% and 74% at the Faculty of Sciences and at IRAD. It is high time for the conditions for their renewal to be created. We will come back to this issue in the last section of this chapter.

Age	University of Yaoundé I		IRAD		Total
	No. of Researchers	Percentage of researchers	No. of researchers	Percentage of researchers	
Less than 30	0	0 %	0	0%	0%
30-39	46	20%	16	8%	14%
40-49	116	50%	146	74%	61%
50-59	57	25%	36	18%	22%
60-65	13	5%	0	0%	3%
Total	232		198		

Table C  
Age of scientists at IRAD and University of Yaoundé I (Faculty of sciences only)

(this is the case for *AIRE-Développement* and the INCO-DEV programme of the European Union), or to support individual researchers (this is the case of French *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* and the International Foundation for Science). The programmes supporting research teams and individuals have enabled many Cameroonian researchers to continue pursuing their research activities.

Furthermore, given the importance of the agricultural sector to the national economy and the leading role that research should play in the development of this sector, in the early 1990s the government decided, with the support of several donors including the World Bank, to draw up a proposal for reforming agricultural research in depth. The conclusions of this proposal led to the fusion of the Institute of Agricultural Research (*Institut de Recherche Agricole*, IRA) and of the Institute of Zootechnical and Veterinary Research (*Institut de Recherches Zootechniques et Vétérinaires*, IRZV). The fusion of

the institutes aimed to simplify administrative procedures and reduce the number of administrators and operational structures, as well as to decentralize the research programme in order to better take into account the needs of the users in the different agro-ecological zones of the country. It is expected that decentralisation will ultimately lead to a wider implementation of research results.

### 2.3. Tensions, initiatives and changes in the profession

The economic crisis not only caused a considerable drop in public spending on research institutes and universities, it also meant that the salaries of the researchers became so low that they had to come up with strategies for survival depending, to a large extent, on consultancies for international organisations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private businesses.

### 2.3.1. Devaluation of the salaries and strategies for survival

Prior to 1993, researchers and University lecturers in Cameroon were paid competitive salaries as compared to those in other African countries, enabling them to enjoy a relatively high standard of living. However, in 1993 the economic crisis caught-up with researchers' salaries resulting in a 66% reduction. This drop in salaries was followed a few months later by a devaluation of 50% of the CFAf compared to the French currency.

Within a year, the purchasing power of Cameroonian researchers had fallen catastrophically. A research officer earning 250 000 CFAf, about 380 Euros per month, in the beginning of the 1990s saw his purchasing power drop to around 125 Euros per month. On the upper side of the salary scale, a research director earning 500 000 CFAf in 1990, around 760 Euros per month, got the equivalent of 250 Euros per month in 1993. While by 2000 salaries have risen by 10 to 15%, they are not sufficient for the researchers and their families to live on. Table 2 presents the official salaries of the researchers<sup>8</sup> during three successive periods: in 1992, before the drop in the salaries of civil servants occurring in 1993; in 1993, after the drop; and in July 2000, after the decree of the Head of State, signed on the 27th of July 2000, increasing the salaries of civil servants<sup>9</sup>.

The drastic drop in salaries was a key event in the narrative of each interviewed IFS grantee (sometimes referred to as the "descent into Hell"). A common complaint was that "to be able to

conduct his profession in a proper fashion, the researcher needs a salary that enables him to provide for his family; we get a salary, but it does not cover elementary needs any more". The references to the pitiful salaries can be found pinned to office walls: "and the Lord saw our work, and it pleased him well. He asked to see our salaries, and he turned back and started to cry".

One result of the low salaries is that many have left research, and the ones that have stayed are often not very motivated. Those who have left generally remain in Cameroon. However, they prefer to look for employment in other sectors of national activity that offer better pay, as witnessed by a geographer of the National Institute of Cartography: "three of our geographers trained at the Institute have left it for the land registry, the mission for rural and urban network development (*Mission d'Aménagement et d'Équipement des Réseaux Urbains et Ruraux*) or the private sector as topographer, expert geometrician, in geodesy". Many keep their position, ensuring a minimum service: "the teachers keep their position at the University, but they are only keeping up appearances. They provide for their families by taking on any better paid job elsewhere". The University can do nothing about this; the only thing it can do is to draw the attention of the authorities to the salary conditions of the academics and to ask for their improvement so that they can concentrate on their work.

The strategies for survival vary with the generations, the family situation and the disciplines. Many young researchers, newly married and with children, cannot afford the rent of a town flat and

Grade	Echelon	Indice	Monthly salary before taxes		
			1992	1993	July 2000
Attaché de Recherche	1	465	240 667	123 798	138 975
	2	530	269 936	132 362	149 050
Chargé de Recherche	1	605	302 723	142 243	160 675
	2	665	322 010	150 148	169 975
	3	715	341 296	156 736	177 725
Maître de Recherche	1	715	341 296	156 736	177 725
	2	785	368 296	165 959	188 575
	3	870	401 084	177 157	201 750
	4	940	428 085	186 380	212 600
	5	1 005	453 156	194 943	222 875
	6	1 050	470 514	200 872	229 650
Directeur de Recherche	1	1 050	470 514	200 872	229 650
	2	1 115	495 587	209 436	239 725
	3	1 140	505 230	212 730	243 600

Table 2  
Researcher salaries (in CFA francs)

have built themselves a low-cost home on the outskirts of the city. Many researchers, having saved after having worked abroad, have invested in a taxi, or a minibus, or a small shop run by their spouse<sup>11</sup> or another family member. Others have invested in small field plots cultivated by the family in order to sell the produce on the local markets.

Even if they stay within their own area of expertise, many earn extra money by “spending time running from seminar to seminar to collect per diems and travel expenses”, turning into “hunters of expertise”, “travelling through the whole of Africa to teach”. Many lecturers teach in Congo, Benin and other countries of the region. The researchers, for their part, engage in consultancy activities for their personal benefit. This has led to discussions: “some have asked that the researchers pay 20% of their earnings to the institutes”. This is also what the minister in charge wished. It has however not been implemented.

### 2.3.2. *A lost generation of researchers*

While salaries decrease and established researchers leave their profession, what should be the new incoming generation of researchers is being lost to Cameroon. Since the late 1980s, unemployment has affected a large proportion of higher education graduates. Around 1,300 graduates emerge each year from the Cameroonian system of education holding their first degree (with a mean success rate of about 30%), but thousands of degree holders have not been able to find a first job. More than 8,000 graduates of higher education – engineers as well – are affected by unemployment because the local job market cannot provide adequate job opportunities and the state has suspended recruitment into the civil service as well as the competitive exams to enter some of the “*grandes écoles*” open to first degree holders.

High unemployment among degree holders is not, however, a sign that the diplomas held are of poor quality. Most of the interviewed researchers maintain that the degrees earned in Cameroon are of a good standard: “the Cameroonian student has an international level, he/she is a credit to the teachers who trained him/her. Selection is ruthless and wholly dependent on the teachers. The student is passed only depending on his/her exam results”. This assertion is supported by the fact that Cameroonian researchers are very competitive, and their success rates among the highest at the bilateral and

international foundations for research financing. This is also the case for the Cameroonian researchers who apply for IFS research grants.

The erosion of the research community is also reflected in the dormancy of many scientific associations. All the interviewees mentioned the existence of many scientific associations, but they all agree that they today are active only very little or not at all: “The society of Cameroonian mathematicians exists but does not function, as is the case for many similar societies in Africa.” These associations were involved in the creation of many scientific journals which are no longer in circulation. The main Cameroonian journal *Revue Science et Technique* with many different parts (Health Sciences, Earth Sciences, Agronomical and Zootechnical Sciences) has not been published since 1990. This difficulty to continue publishing scientific journals is confirmed by a retired research manager: “most of the journals in science and technology disappear already after the first two issues, mainly because of the lack of funding, the bad management and the insufficient number of subscriptions”.

### 2.3.3. *Researchers without results*

The decree on the status of researcher signed in July 1980 marked an important step in the evolution of research in Cameroon, and attracted many young graduates towards research at the time. Today many government members have a high level of scientific training, in particular those responsible for higher education and research. Researchers benefit from a special status within civil service and that the supervision of research is carried out by a Ministry which defends its rights and tries to introduce a dynamic national research policy. However, as has been detailed in the previous pages, working conditions have deteriorated greatly and the Ministry lacks the financial means to implement its policies. Lack of funding and shrinking opportunities to carry-out research for the public good limit the researchers capacity to play a role in the development of Cameroon. This lack of engagement with the needs of Cameroonians results in the fact that researchers do not enjoy much recognition or social prestige in Cameroonian society. A geographer’s comments express the frustration of many researchers: “the street does not acknowledge the researcher, except perhaps the medical doctor or the agronomist... a surgeon carrying out a successful operation is recognized by public opinion, the others, no-one knows them.”

The absence of national funds to support research for the public good is further complicated by the rise of consultancy work at the bequest of foreign institutions and organisations. According to some, researchers have become mercenaries at the mercy of donors. As a result, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technology speaks of the necessity for the Cameroonians to repossess research. The following quote adequately summarizes the feeling of having had one's own free will taken away, a feeling shared by many researchers and people in charge of research in Cameroon: "We have become workers on our own building site, the workers of the donors, of the French, but also of others, that are becoming more and more numerous. We hand over data to them, and they do with it as they please. The countries in Africa have become objects of research, not subjects; on top of all that, we do not even profit from it. They fund the research projects according to their own interests. We want a partnership which will enable us to draw something from it for our own needs".

Another researcher of English descent living in Cameroon since 1970 confirms the above: "If we don't watch out, we will become collectors of samples sent to Europe. The developed countries have a tendency to use Africa as a place where you do some research which you later bring home, like a laboratory where you do experiments. Africa is selling herself without thinking. She does not see where the results go, and she does not profit from them."

In response to this unsustainable situation, Professor Henri Hogbe Nlend, former Minister of Scientific Research and Technology, organized the first conference of ministers in charge of Research and Development in western and central Africa in January 1999 on the general theme of "Boosting and repossessing scientific research in Africa for the good of the African people in a context of globalization". Among the recent innovations in this spirit, a University research grant scheme (*Fonds Universitaire d'appui à la recherche*, FUAR) was created for the period 1999-2001 at the University of Yaoundé I (See Box 7).

## 2.4. Institutional innovations and new forms of partnership

The difficulties related to the economic crisis have also led the foreign co-operation agencies to review their mode of work. This has led to the rise of new

institutional systems within the framework of a renegotiated partnership. Furthermore, the withdrawal of the State has opened up the way for new players in development, particularly the NGOs that are gaining in influence. In this context, some disciplines and new institutions have succeeded amongst the general erosion of the Cameroonian research infrastructure.

### 2.4.1. Islands of resistance

Whereas the national institutions of research and higher education are battling with almost insurmountable budgetary constraints and seem to be declining, a few groups of researchers and research teams, mostly small, find the means to make their laboratories work, supervise graduate students, maintain scientific networks abroad and publish. The survival of these islands of resistance is possible thanks to the international solidarity of colleagues from foreign laboratories. It has happened in a few departments that Cameroon has been able to replace the generation of professors trained during the 1960s and 1970s (mainly in France, in the USA, in Great Britain, but also in Russia), most of them still active, by a generation of young researchers having mostly obtained their PhDs at the University of Yaoundé during the 1980s.

This is the case in chemistry, and in particular in the division of organic chemistry focusing on the extraction of natural products from medicinal plants. This community of organic chemists trained in Yaoundé were able to ensure its "reproduction" as well as reach a critical mass at the eve of the university reform of 1993. Its spread towards the newly created universities of Dschang and Buea seems to have been a success and will be reinforced by the recent recruitment taking place in these institutions. Its definite success will however be established only if and when these new laboratories train a new generation of chemists. Apart from the international solidarity mentioned earlier, the emergence and strengthening of these groups owe a great deal to continuous foreign funding from, among others, several French programmes and institutions (e.g. IRD and *Campus*), a Swedish programme, ISP (mainly financed by Sida/SAREC), and grants from the International Foundation for Science.



## Box 7

The University Research Grant Scheme, *Le Fonds Universitaire d'Appui à la Recherche (FUAR)*

For the first time in the history of the University in Cameroon, a competitive national research fund was launched during the academic year 1998/99 at the University of Yaoundé I. This fund, named *Le Fonds Universitaire d'Appui à la Recherche (FUAR)*, has several objectives:

- The re-structuring of the existing endogenous academic expertise.
- The development of synergistic forces between different research teams, with an emphasis on multidisciplinary.
- The strengthening of the science laboratories at the University around concerted research issues.

After close consultation with the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technology, the FUAR focused on five branches:

- Promotion of the cultural heritage, languages and development.
- Education and training.
- Bioscience and biotechnology.
- Low-cost technologies for water supply
- The environment and forests.

The research projects have been selected taking into account the following criteria:

- Scientific quality of the laboratory or the research team as judged by their previous publications in the concerned field (30%).
- Scientific quality of the research project – methodology, novelty, information (documentation) (30%).
- Relevance and impact of the project on national development (30%).
- Feasibility of the project taking into account the available resources (personnel, equipment, funding) and of its duration, two years (10%).

Of a total amount of 90 million CFAf, the budget of the FUAR was to be provided by the Ministry of Higher Education (30 million CFAf), the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technology (30 million CFAf) and the rectorate of the University of Yaoundé I (30 million CFAf).

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2000, Professor Jean Tabi Manga, the new Rector, signed the agreement to allocate the subsidies to 29 category A projects (of high priority) and 22 category B projects (of average priority). However, high hopes for this new programme are tempered by reports that as of early 2003 only the first half of the granted amount had been disbursed. Furthermore, some scientists in Cameroon worry that the selection process has not achieved a satisfactory level of transparency.

#### 2.4.2. *The creation of new autonomous research centres in partnership*

In the institutional landscape of Cameroon of the end of the 1990s, the *Centre Régional Bananiers et Plantains (CRBP)* in Njombe hosting several IFS grantees stands out as a privileged structure. With its well equipped laboratories housed in newly constructed and well maintained buildings in front of which new cars are parked, it contrasts with the centres of the IRAD. It is also provided with a scientific library of good quality, adequate budgets for field work, and good quality lodging for its researchers.

Founded in 1989 in the context of the economic crisis, the CRBP was conceived as a centre of excellence in research and training on the subject of the plantain and other banana varieties. It was also meant to be an adequate host to agricultural research in partnership. According to its foundation agreements, this centre is to be administratively and financially autonomous and headed by a directorate composed of a head of administration, an executive of the French Ministry of Cooperation, of a science co-ordinator, a CIRAD researcher, and of a centre director, a researcher from the IRAD. The Cameroonian State finances the centre with the participation of several donors such as the

European Union, the World Bank and the French Ministry of Cooperation. The CRBP has until now (2003) worked in a satisfactory way for all parties.

The IRAD station at Garoua, also supported by France, was created on the same model. Later, in 1995/96, the research programmes in different branches of agro-industrial production (coffee, cocoa, rubber, oil palm) as well as fruits and vegetables were re-organized and benefited from funding by the French Ministry of Cooperation (today merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), as well as the financial support of the producers. The continuous cuts in State subsidies, in particular from 1986 to 1995, led to the establishment of these projects whose institutional organization is built on the model of the CRBP and the Garoua project.

## 2.5 Encouraging steps

In February of 2003 the newly appointed Minister of Higher Education, Professor Maurice Tchente, oversaw the "*Journées Universitaires pour la Science et la Technologie*" (JUST). The initial goal of JUST, to map the state of affairs of S&T activities in the universities, became more ambitious when the Ministry of Science & Technology and the private sector became engaged and contributed to a needed dialogue on science, society and development in Cameroon. The event was deemed a success and the high level of participation of Cameroonian entrepreneurs may lead to stronger partnerships between universities and enterprises in Cameroon. JUST was also partly responsible for the creation of

specific funds to support research at each university in Cameroon. At the same time, the research fund of the Ministry of Higher Education was increased from 150 million CFAf in 2002 to 300 million CFAf in 2003.

Whereas through the process of deprofessionalisation described in the preceding pages the pool of active people in science at universities and research institutes has significantly decreased over the course of a decade, there are now promising signs emerging from Cameroon. Late in 2002 and in early 2003 the Ministry of Science and Technology launched an unprecedented recruitment campaign. Altogether, 278 young researchers being, all less than 35 years old, were recruited. Most of the new recruits are between 25 and 30 years old and have a MSc or a DEA. Only a few have a PhD. The lion share of them went to IRAD which is by far the biggest research institute and to a lesser extent to the Institut de Recherches Médicales et d'Etudes des Plantes Médicinales (IMPM). The situation of these new recruits is still fragile however, and some six months after their recruitment they were still waiting to get their salaries.

The situation in Cameroon within the S&T community in 2003 was one of hope, with young researchers beginning to enter the system, and a strong nodes of highly qualified senior researchers in key centres and departments. However, the rejuvenation of the Cameroonian S&T infrastructure during the coming years will clearly depend on the continued attentions of the both the government of Cameroon and cooperation with national and international partners and donors.

## Chapter Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For a more detailed account of the birth of science and research institutions in Cameroon, refer to Gaillard and Khelfaoui (2001).
- <sup>2</sup> Dr G. BOL ALIMA was appointed head of this ministerial department and was replaced in 1985 by M.D. ABOUEM A TCHOYI.
- <sup>3</sup> Abdoulaye BABALE was appointed head of this Ministry.
- <sup>4</sup> Decree no. 80/275 of the 18th of July, on the status of researcher.
- <sup>5</sup> It should be mentioned that a new researcher status is being discussed. Elements aiming at a closer resemblance with the existing status of university teacher (like for example the age of retirement) are reported to be part of it.
- <sup>6</sup> Or 400 for 100 000 people, around one-third ratio the countries of Northern Africa (Morocco: 1 132; Algeria: 1 236; and Tunisia: 1 253), one-sixth the European average and one-tenth that of France. This rate however puts Cameroon in a slightly above average position compared to the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, in front of Senegal (237) and behind Côte d'Ivoire (413), Botswana (546), Namibia (738) and South Africa (1 524) (World Bank, 2000).
- <sup>7</sup> USAID withdrew their funds following the controversial re-election of the President of the Republic of Cameroon. This withdrawal was a catastrophe for the institutions and the researchers who profited from USAID funds.
- <sup>8</sup> There are equivalents between the researcher ranks and those of the higher education lecturers, but the ranks within the higher education system are more spread out.
- <sup>9</sup> On top of their normal salary, the researchers can benefit from a research bonus and a bonus of technical nature; for the teachers, a higher education bonus and a bonus of technical nature, the amounts of which depend on the rank.
- <sup>10</sup> 100 CFAf = 1 FF = 0.015 EUR.
- <sup>11</sup> There are very few women in the research institutes in Cameroon. At the IRAD, in 1999, there were 18 women out of 204 researchers (or 8.9%). They were equally distributed between research officers and research assistants. None is Director of Research. For the whole of the Faculty of Sciences, there were 29 women out of a total of 214 (or 13.5%) during the academic year 1997/98.



### 3. Applicants and grantees in Cameroon

Researchers in Cameroon have submitted applications to IFS and been awarded research grants since 1976. In this chapter the process of applying for IFS funding is briefly reviewed, followed by a description of the applicants and grantees in Cameroon and a brief review of their distribution among institutions and research areas. Also described are the success rates of applicants.

#### 3.1 The application process

Applications for IFS support are accepted year-round, and funding decisions are made twice annually. The primary type of support provided by IFS is a research grant – in the maximum amount of USD 12,000 – which can be awarded to a researcher up to three times. After an initial pre-screening at the Secretariat, applications for IFS support are submitted to a group of Scientific Advisers who have an expertise in the applicant's field. The Scientific Advisers send their evaluation of the application to a Scientific Advisory Committee consisting of between four and eight senior researchers, where a recommendation is made to IFS regarding the application. Regardless of the decision, the comments and constructive criticisms of the Scientific Advisers are compiled and forwarded to the applicant. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to review the comments of the Scientific Advisers and to submit an improved application.

#### 3.2 Applications and success rates

During the period 1993-2002, IFS received 120 applications<sup>1</sup> for a first grant from scientists in Cameroon. Of these, 44 research proposals were approved, giving a 36.6% success rate. This is a high rate of success. In comparison, the success rate of researchers in Cameroon during the 1990s was more than two times higher than that for Africa (15%) and Asia (17%), and higher than that for Latin America (30%).

The high success rate is to be related to the quality of training of Cameroonian researchers. Many of the Cameroonian scientists did their graduate and postgraduate studies at the University of Yaoundé (cf. Chapter 4), the quality of which is praised both in Cameroon and outside Cameroon. Furthermore, a research grant application submitted by a scientist in Cameroon is rarely sent to IFS directly. It is first peer-reviewed in Cameroon by colleagues who are most often former IFS grantees. This practise was explained during interviews and seems to be the rule among organic chemists and food scientists, groups that have been particularly successful. Fifty percent and 47% of the applications submitted by Cameroonian scientists and reviewed within the IFS research area of Food Science and Natural Product Chemistry have been approved (see below).

On average, IFS receives some 10 applications from researchers in Cameroon each year, and awards between 3 to 6 grants (see Table 3). The lowest number of applications received during the period under review in Table 3 (1993-2002) was seven, and 2000 stands out as a year with many applications. Years with many applications can often be linked to particular recruitment efforts in Cameroon. The 19 applications received in 2000, for

Year	1st Applications	1st Grants awarded
1993	7	3
1994	10	6
1995	13	4
1996	14	6
1997	13	4
1998	9	3
1999	14	3
2000	19	4
2001	7	6
2002	14	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>44</b>

Table 3

Number of applications and first grants by year (1993-2002)<sup>2</sup>

example, are the result of increased IFS visibility in Cameroon in conjunction with visits and information seminars during the field work for this MESIA study.

During the period under review, IFS targeted its support towards six different Research Areas<sup>3</sup>. To calculate success rates for each respective research area we look into the applications that were processed during 9 successive sessions<sup>4</sup> or nearly five years<sup>5</sup> (see Table 4). During that period, 47 applications were submitted to IFS and 17 were approved giving a success rate of 35%. As mentioned earlier Food Science and Natural Product chemistry have the highest success rates. In addition to the reasons mentioned earlier this success, particularly in Natural Products chemistry, is likely related to a several decades old tradition in Cameroon, to a dynamic department of organic chemistry at the University of Yaoundé with a critical mass of scientists and to its spread to the newly created universities particularly in Dschang and Buea (see Chapter 2). We also believe that the dynamism and survival of these groups have been possible so far thanks to inter-

Research Area	Applications	Grants	Success rate (%)
Food Science	6	3	50
Natural Products	17	8	47
Animal Production	6	2	33
Crop Science	10	3	30
Forestry/Agroforestry	5	1	20
Aquatic Resources	5	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 4

Number of first applications and first grants per research area (1998S-2002S)

Institution	Applications	Grants	Success rate (%)
Univ. of Dschang	6	3	50
IRAD	6	3	50
Univ. of Ngaoundéré	11	5	45
Univ. of Yaoundé I	14	6	43
Univ. of Buea	3	0	0
Others	9	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 5

Distribution of applications and first grants according to type of institution (1998S-2002S)

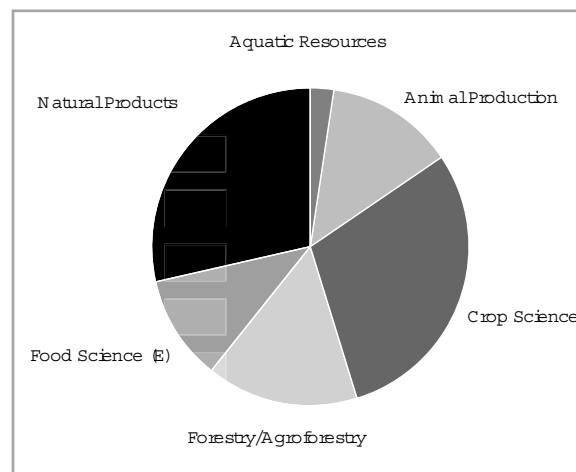


Figure 7:  
Grantees by Research Area

national solidarity with foreign colleagues and continuous support from different organisations during the last three decades, including IFS.

Success rates are slightly lower than average for Animal Production (30%) and Forestry/Agroforestry (20%), and no projects in the area of Aquatic Resources during the last five years were approved. Aquatic resources proposals from Cameroon do not have a history of success at IFS, with only two researchers awarded support since 1974.

Overall, success rates are higher in the large national agricultural research institute (IRAD) and in the universities than in the more isolated institutions in which scientific research is not the main mandate and in which a critical mass of scientists is not available (see Table 5). Examples of the latter institutions are provincial institutions (e.g. *Délégation provinciale de l'élevage, des pêches et des industries*) or associations of farmers (eg Fako Animal Farmers Cooperative).

### 3.3 The grantees

During the period 1974-2002, 86 scientists in Cameroon were awarded a first IFS research grant. Two never started their research projects and their grants were consequently withdrawn. The total number of scientists supported by IFS in Cameroon up to the end of 2002 is therefore 84. Of these 84, six are deceased and 38 were still receiving support from IFS in early 2003.

Crop Science is the Research Area with the greatest number of grantees in Cameroon (25), immedi-

Research Area	One grant		Two grants		Three grants		Four grants		Total number of grantees
	A	C	A	C	A	C	A	C	
Aquatic Resources	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Animal Production	3	3	1	2	0	2	0	0	11
Crop Science	5	12	1	3	2	2	0	0	25
Forestry/Agroforestry	2	5	2	3	0	1	0	0	13
Food Science	3	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
Natural Products	9	2	6	0	2	3	0	2	24
<b>Total number of grantees</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>49</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>2</b>		

Table 6

Grantees in Cameroon: number of grantees by Research Area, period, and status

ately followed by Natural Products (see Figure 7). Number of grantees by research area, research period and activity status (“active”, still ongoing; “completed”, support from IFS terminated) are shown in Table 6.

Of the 84 grantees in Cameroon, five are women (6%) and 79 are men (94%). The percentage of Cameroonian grantees that are women is roughly half the overall percentage of scientists that are women in Cameroon (see chapter 2). The share of women in the population of IFS grantees in Cameroon is also lower than the one of IFS grantees in Africa in general (11%). Meanwhile, women represent 22% of the entire population of IFS grantees and over 26% of new grantees in 2002.

Yaoundé (the capital city and the location of the oldest and biggest university) and Dschang (the site of a particularly dynamic new university) are the two cities in Cameroon with the highest concentration of IFS grantees. Together, they host more than two-thirds (70%) of the grantees in Cameroon (Table 7). The other locations are either the sites of the newly established universities (Ngaoundéré, Buea and Douala), research centres or stations of IRAD (Bamenda, Buea, Garoua, Kribi), or other institutions such as the Botanical Garden in Limbe.

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter shows that IFS grantees in Cameroon are concentrated in Yaoundé the capital city where the main and oldest university is located. During the last 15 years, applications submitted from scientists working in the new universities have however increased. This is particularly true for the University of Dschang and the University of Ngaoundéré. Women are grossly underrepre-

City in Cameroon	Number of grantees
Bamenda	2
Buea	4
Douala	3
Dschang	18
Garoua	4
Kribi	2
Limbe	1
Ngaoundéré	8
Njombé	3
Yaoundé	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>

Table 7

Distribution of grantees by city



Map 1

Geographical distribution of grantees in Cameroon by city (at the time of the first grant)

sented. This is partly due to the low representation of women in scientific disciplines in Cameroon in general. Yet, the percentage of women scientists in the population of IFS grantees in Cameroon is lower than the percentage of women scientists in

the population of scientists in Cameroon, indicating that IFS should further explore why women are not better represented. For example: do women researchers in Cameroon have more fragile networks of support; are they poorly represented in IFS fields or; due commitments to family and children that delay their research careers, are they too old to qualify for IFS support?

Success rates in Cameroon are comparatively very high. They are even higher in the universities and research institutes having a critical mass of scientists, several decades of tradition of research and dynamic and structured research teams, the leader of which being often a former IFS grantee. Conversely, success rates are poor or very poor when applications are submitted from very isolated institutions having a limited number of scientists

and no research tradition. The particularly high success rate in Cameroon can in part be explained by the peer-review of applications organised by colleagues who are most often former IFS grantees. This practise should advantageously be promoted and transferred to other countries in Africa.

IFS received a fairly constant number of applications per year from scientists in Cameroon during the 1990s, and there has been rather little fluctuation in the annual number of grants awarded to scientists in Cameroon. Increased numbers of applications, such as during the year 2000, can be attributed to increased IFS activity and visibility in Cameroon. A further increase in applications from Cameroon may be obtained if IFS can target the newly recruited cadre of researchers described in Chapter 2.

#### Chapter Notes

<sup>1</sup> This figure does not include applications for renewal grants by researchers that had completed their first or second IFS research period.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that there is a time delay between an application is submitted and a decision is taken. Applications submitted during the last six months of a given year are normally processed during the following year. Thus, success rate is not calculated for each year but for the all period.

<sup>3</sup> As of May 2001, IFS is deemphasizing its individual Research Areas and instead describes its Small Grants Programme in terms of supporting research relevant to the sustainable management of biological resources. This change in emphasis also opens the door to researchers from social science disciplines and researchers working on topics such as biodiversity, water resources, and climate change, given that their research is justified in terms of sustainably managing the biological resource base and is relevant to local social, economic, and environmental conditions.

<sup>4</sup> IFS organises two sessions a year referred to as Summer (S) and Winter (W) sessions.

<sup>5</sup> The choice of this period was dictated by data available in the IFS database.



## 4. Characteristics of the surveyed IFS grantee population

In this chapter some general characteristics of the IFS grantee population in Cameroon and the population of grantees participating in the questionnaire survey are described. Information about respondents to the questionnaires, all IFS grantees in Cameroon, and general characteristics of the science community in Cameroon are briefly compared.

Looking at the entire pool of grantees in Cameroon (and at Cameroonian respondents to the questionnaire survey), their average age at the time of their first grant from IFS is approximately 35 years old. During the past five years (1998-2002), this figure rose slightly to 36.2 years of age. One difference is that during the 1970s and 1980s, scientists in their late 20s and early 30s applied for and were awarded grants. In recent years, however, the youngest grantees have been in their mid-30s. This trend towards older grantees can be expected to continue unless the aging of the Cameroonian science community can be halted through sustainable initiatives to recruit young researchers. The initiative described in Chapter 2 is a hopeful first step in this direction.

Only five of 86 scientists that were awarded grants between 1974 and 2002 were women (6%). If we consider the percentages of academic staff that are female at the University of Yaoundé (13,5%) and at IRAD (9%), we see that women are clearly underrepresented in the IFS population compared to the general population of women researchers working in Cameroon. Discussions with women scientists in Cameroon also suggest that the 40 year age limit for IFS applicants that was in effect until 2002<sup>1</sup> may be more of an obstacle for women than it is for men. Womens' choice to have children after completing their studies, as well as institutional impediments to women becoming scientists, means that they may turn 40 before they reach the stage of their career where they are prepared to apply for IFS funding. However, there is only anecdotal

evidence to support this hypothesis. The five women to receive grants from IFS were respectively 28, 31, 32, 36 and 38 years of age when IFS funding was made available to them. The small numbers of women grantees make it difficult to draw convincing conclusions regarding the IFS age limit using only IFS data.

The questionnaire survey was sent to 59 current and former Cameroonian grantees working in Cameroon. A total of 48 grantees responded, among them 45 men and three women. Twenty-two of the respondents used English as their preferred scientific language, and 26 preferred to use French.

All 48 respondents reported that they were married. At the time that they answered the questionnaire, the respondents ranged in age from 38 years old to 58 years old, with an average of slightly more than 46 years old. Responding grantees had between zero and 11 children, but on average 3.7.

Forty-three grantees reported the occupation of their spouses. The majority of spouses held intermediate-level positions such as teachers, nurses, civil servants, technicians, librarians, etc. Eight spouses worked in the home, two were academics and one was a medical doctor.

A small majority of the grantees in Cameroon (52%) had a PhD when they applied for their first grant at IFS (Table 8). This is a considerable difference from Tanzania, where instead only 35% of the grantees applying for their first grant held a PhD (Gaillard et al, 2002).

Degree	No. of Grantees	% of Total
BSc	7	8
MSc	33	40
PhD	43	52

Table 8  
Degree held at the time of the first grant

Country	BSc	MSc	PhD	Post-Doc	Total
Cameroon	56	29	25	8	118
France	4	10	12	2	28
Nigeria	7	10	9	0	26
United States	4	13	5	1	23
United Kingdom	1	5	6	1	13
Belgium	1	3	3	0	7
Sweden	0	0	1	2	3
Germany	0	0	2	0	2
Sierra Leone	2	0	0	0	2
The Netherlands	0	2	0	0	2
Russia	0	1	0	0	1
Rwanda	1	0	0	0	1
Switzerland	0	0	0	1	1
Togo	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>228</b>

Table 9

Countries where Cameroonian IFS grantees have been awarded degrees

Contrary to the trend noticed by IFS in many countries in Africa, nearly one-half of the degrees reported at the time of the first IFS grant (47%) were awarded in Cameroon. This percentage has increased to 60% during the 1990s. France and Nigeria are respectively the second and third source

of higher degrees. But their relative importance (this is particularly true for Nigeria where the quality of education worsened) has levelled off during the 1990s. During the same period a few more degrees were taken in the United States, United Kingdom and Belgium. The importance of the two latter countries as a source of degrees remain however limited.

Looking at all the degrees held by Cameroonian grantees, both before and after the first IFS grant, 52% of them were completed in Cameroon. The five main foreign countries in which Cameroonian IFS grantees have been awarded degrees are by order of importance France, Nigeria, United States, United Kingdom and Belgium (see Table 9). The importance of Nigeria can be explained by its relative geographical and linguistic proximity for many English speaking Cameroonian from the South-Western and North-Western Provinces at a time when the Nigerian Higher Education system was of good quality. It is most common that grantees in Cameroon received their BSc in Cameroon (74%). Those that later took higher degrees, predominantly did so outside Cameroon, but the number of PhD awarded in Cameroon is important (25 out of 64 PhD holder).

#### Chapter Notes

<sup>1</sup> As of 2003, researchers aged 40 to 45 from Sub-Saharan Africa are eligible for an IFS research grant if they received an academic degree within the previous five years.

## 5. Research conditions

To effectively direct support to the regions and countries where there is the greatest need and potential impact, it is important for IFS to understand the context in which its grantees work. In the following chapter, results from the questionnaire survey are presented and analysed that illustrate researchers' work environment, both their resources and their rewards, and their connection to the global science community. The results and analysis provided in the following pages lead to a discussion of the role of IFS in the Cameroonian research community.

### 5.1 Grantee livelihoods

IFS grantees pursued their scientific careers primarily within public research institutes and public universities (Table 10). One reported working in both a public university and public research institute, and one reported splitting his time between a public university and an NGO.

Of the 48 grantees that responded to the questionnaire, only two believed that their salaries as scientists were adequate to support their families.

Meanwhile 24 grantees reported that they work extra jobs to support themselves, nine of those having multiple extra jobs (see Table 11). Farming was the most commonly cited extra job (15) with over 31% of all grantees that participated in the survey working in farming.

Grantees were asked to consider several aspects of their employment as scientists, and indicate whether they considered these elements to be advantages or disadvantages to working as a scientist. The results indicate a mixed pessimism among Cameroonian grantees regarding their employment as scientists (Table 12). Salary scale and social benefits were identified as disadvantages by most grantees, while job security was the one aspect that most grantees felt to be an advantage.

Opinions were varied with respect to retirement benefits and opportunities for promotion.

Grantees were asked to indicate the amount of work time that they devote to five activities: teaching, research, administration, extension, and consultancy, as well as to other unspecified activities. Grantees were also asked to indicate the ideal division of their labour among these activities. In

Type of institution	No. of grantees
Public university	26
Public research institute	19
NGO	2
Private university	0
Private research institute	0

Table 10  
Institutions that host grantees' scientific careers

Type of extra job	No. of Grantees
Teaching	8
Own Consultancy or medical private practice	4
Own private business	1
Farming	15
Somebody else's consultancy or medical practice	2
Somebody else's business	5
Other	5

Table 11  
Types of extra jobs held by grantees

Elements	Advantage	Disadvantage
Salary scale	9	37
Career development	19	26
Job security	38	7
Social benefits	7	33
Retirement	20	18

Table 12  
Grantees' evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages to working as a scientist in Cameroon

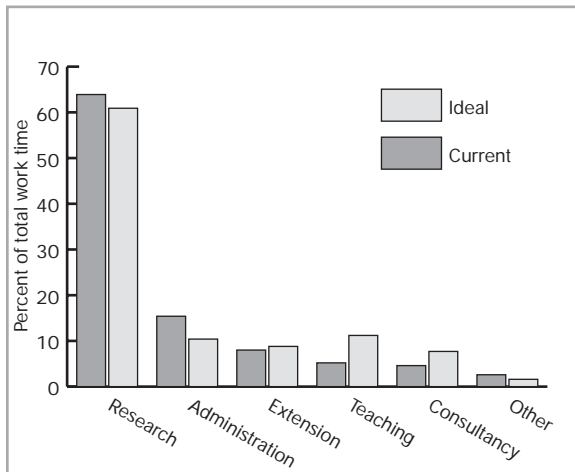


Figure 8 Time allocation of work activities in research institutes

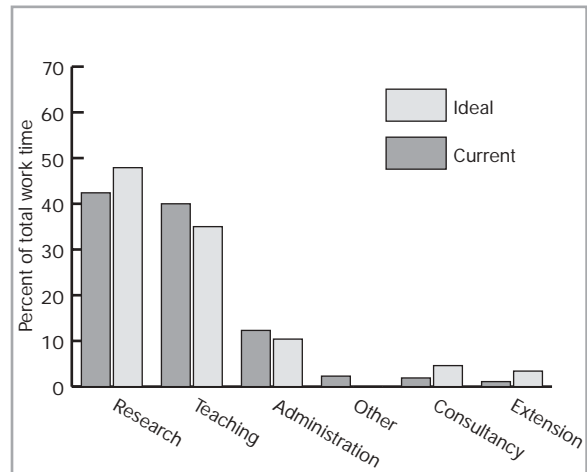


Figure 9 Time allocations of work activities in public universities

Figure 8 the mean present and ideal allocation of time to activities is provided for current and former grantees working in research institutes. Figure 9 provides the same information for grantees working in public universities. Notice that the primary activity of grantees in research institutes is conducting research, and that this is near an ideal level as indicated by the respondents. Meanwhile, as would be expected, grantees in public universities split the majority of their time between teaching and research. Though they in general would like to slightly decrease teaching time and slightly increase research time, current time allocations do not deviate greatly from the ideal allocations.

city system, and as a result have little opportunity to engage with students who will become the next generation of researchers. Figure 8 shows that among IFS grantees at research institutes there is a desire to be involved in more teaching; on average grantees would like to double the amount of time that they devote to teaching.

In Chapter 2 it was discussed that interviews with researchers at research institutes revealed complaints that they are disconnected from the univer-

Of 45 responding grantees, 21 indicated that they devote some percentage of their time, ranging from 1% to 20%, to working as a consultant (mean = 6.5% of work time). This indicates that the rate of grantee participation in consultancies is actually higher than was indicated in Table 11 above. Of those 21, only two indicated that they would like to reduce the amount of time that they spend on consultancy, and many indicated that they would like to increase the amount of time (mean ideal

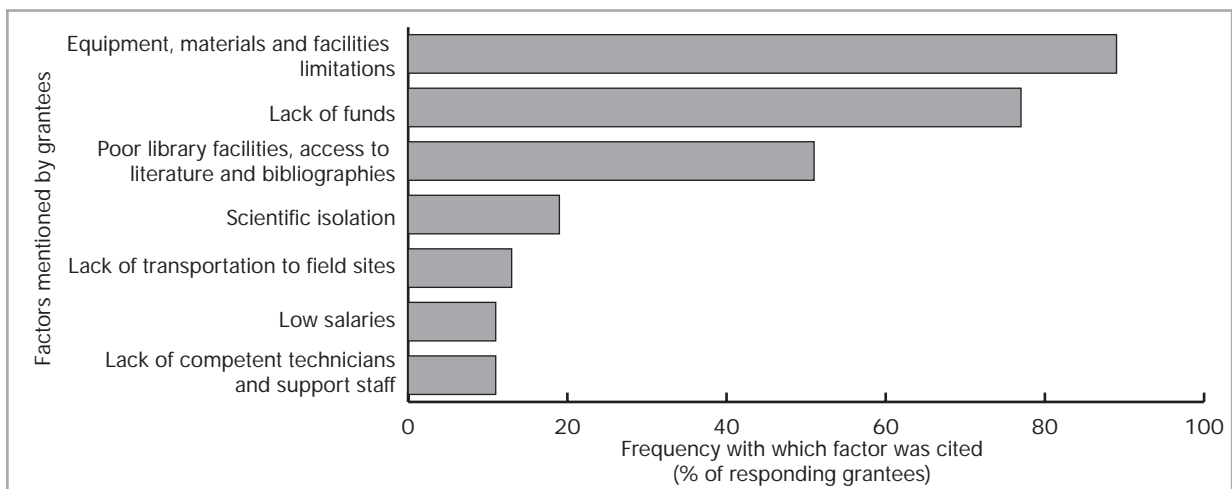


Figure 10 Factors most limiting grantees' research in Cameroon

allocation for all 21 = 9.1% of work time). Furthermore, 10 additional grantees that are not involved in consultancies indicated that they would ideally like to devote between 5% and 10% of their time to consultancies. Interviews conducted for this impact assessment suggest that the interest of researchers to carry out more consultancy work is related to the low salaries that researchers earn from their institutions. In a context where over 90% of grantees find their salaries to be inadequate to support their families, consultancy fees are important means for offsetting the inadequacy of their institutional salaries.

## 5.2 Funding sources

Grantees were asked to indicate the size of their research budget, excluding salaries, during 1998. Of the 48 respondents, 27 reported budgets that ranged widely from USD 30 to USD 100,000. The mean value of reported budgets was USD 16,000. Twenty-one respondents did not report the size of their research budgets.

Forty-one grantees reported the sources of their research budgets for the year 1998. Of these, nearly one-half (19) depend entirely upon foreign sources for research funding: primarily international organisations but also foreign businesses and foreign private foundations. Thirty-one of 41 depended upon foreign sources for 50% or more of their entire research budget, only ten researchers benefited from more domestic research funding than international. These figures indicated that current and former grantees in Cameroon, like most Cameroonian researchers (see Chapter 2) are heavily dependent upon foreign sources of research funding to carry out their work. Future research might explore the extent to which researchers are free to determine their own research agenda.

## 5.3 Main factors limiting grantees' research

Grantees were asked, in an open question, to identify three factors that most limited their research (see Figure 10). Their responses were grouped in sixteen categories and one miscellaneous group. Almost all grantees (89%) cited limitations in the equipment, materials and facilities for research as a leading factor that limited their research. Lack of funds, a closely related factor, was cited as a leading constraint by 77% of respondents and slightly

more than half indicated that lack of access to libraries and bibliographic material were limiting (in a related question only 30% of grantees indicated that they had access to bibliographic databases). These three factors are the same three leading factors that were found to limit research in Tanzania (see Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg, 2001). However, in the case of Cameroon, these factors are cited with much higher frequency and, in contrast, lack of funding is second to lack of equipment, etc. In addition, scientific isolation was an important limitation in Cameroon, whereas it was of less importance in Tanzania.

Next, grantees were presented with ten different recurring difficulties that are encountered while conducting research. They were asked to rate their magnitude as insignificant, tolerable, serious, or obstructive. Figures 11 and 12 chart the results. Most obstructive were factors related to the access to, purchase, and service and maintenance of equipment, as well as access to bibliographic resources. Time was the least restrictive factor.

## 5.4 Communication and scientific contacts

Although IFS support is targeted to individual researchers, IFS grantees in Cameroon generally work in research teams (45 of 47 respondents). These teams are usually multidisciplinary (39 of 43 respondents). Since IFS grants are primarily used to purchase research equipment that becomes the property of the grantees' home institution, these findings support the IFS claim that targeted support to individuals does not only benefit individuals, but also has positive implications for larger groups of researchers. Information gathered in the interviews also indicates that IFS support contributed to the formation and survival of research teams (see also Chapter 2).

Scientists in grantees' home department are the colleagues that grantees most often communicate with regarding their research (Table 13). However, 34 of 48 researchers communicate with other scientists outside their home department more than once per year. Meanwhile, grantees' responses indicate that it is slightly more common for them to communicate with other scientists in Europe, than it is for them to communicate with other researchers in Cameroon. Communication with other scientists in Africa is limited, usually once per year or less.

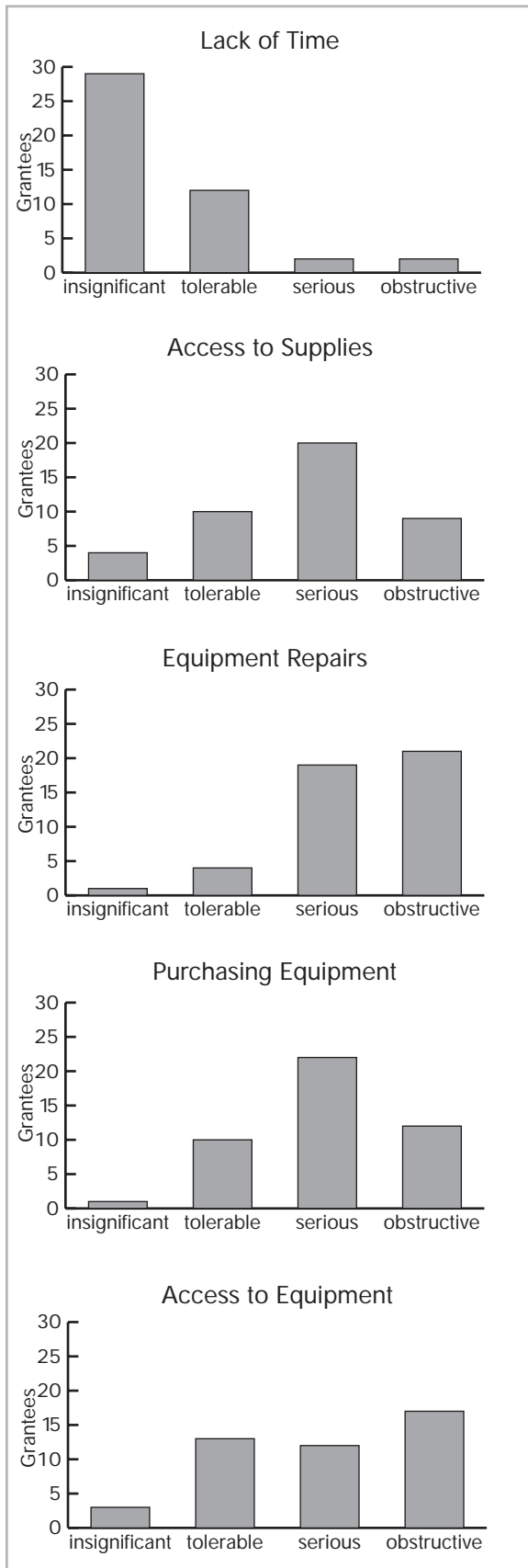


Figure 11 Obstruiveness of specific difficulties to grantees in their work as researchers (part 1)

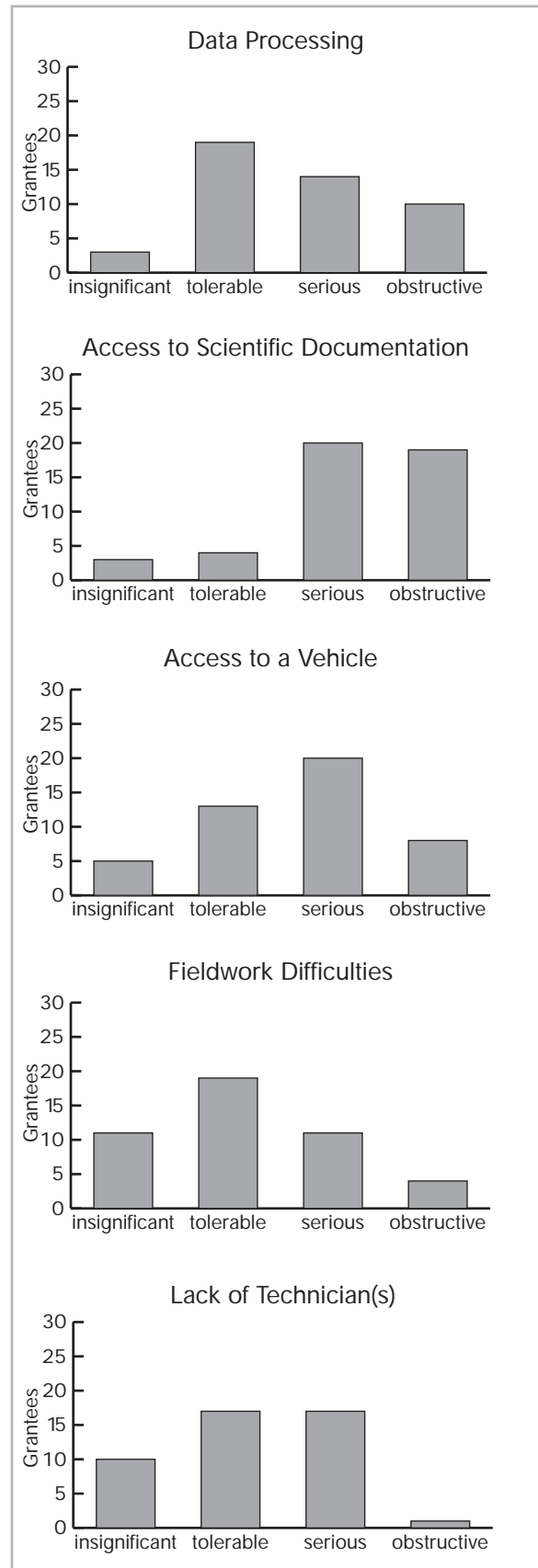


Figure 12 Obstruiveness of specific difficulties to grantees in their work as researchers (part 2)

Groups	Never	Rarely	Annually	Monthly	More often	Mean score	Mean score in Tanzania
	1	2	3	4	5		
Scientists in grantee's department	0	0	5	10	32	4.6	4.6
Scientists in Europe	3	13	13	6	10	3.2	2.7
Scientists in Cameroon	0	12	23	7	5	3.1	3.3
Scientists in other African countries	7	17	15	4	2	2.5	2.5
Scientists in the US and Canada	12	27	4	3	0	2.0	2.1
Scientists in Asia or Latin America	22	17	3	0	1	1.6	1.7
Funding agencies	8	10	13	6	5	2.8	3.4
Extension staff	8	12	13	6	5	2.7	3.7
NGOs	15	10	11	1	4	2.2	2.7
Private clients	17	12	9	1	4	2.1	2.5

Table 13  
Scientific and professional communication

If one compares the communication patterns of Cameroonian scientists with those of Tanzanian scientists, one sees that Cameroonians have more frequent contact with colleagues in Europe, but less with their fellow nationals in other institutions. Furthermore, one sees that Cameroonian scientists have much less contact with funding agencies, extension staff, NGOs, private clients and consultancy groups than their Tanzanian colleagues. A partial explanation for some of the relatively low rates of communication may be found in the general erosion of the relevance of the researcher to Cameroonian stakeholders as discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, Internet access was much less in Cameroon where only one-third of respondents had Internet access, than it was in Tanzania where two-thirds of respondents had access, thereby further restricting opportunities for regular communication with colleagues.

The 47 responding grantees reported that they have attended a sum total of 720 conferences since the beginning of their careers (Table 14). The average number of conferences attended was 15, with two of the earliest grantees in Cameroon reporting no conferences and another of the earliest grantees reporting over 100 conferences attended. Nearly half of the conferences attended by grantees took place in Cameroon, and of these 55% were attended with national support and 30% were attended without any support. Meanwhile, of the 370 conferences attended outside of Cameroon, only 14% were supported by national funds. In comparison, IFS supported over 19% of grantees' participation in conferences outside of Cameroon. Outside of Cameroon, most conference visits were in other African countries or in Europe. Few visits were made to the Western Hemisphere or to Asia by Cameroonian grantees.

Conferences	National support	IFS support	Other foreign support	Without support	Total
Cameroon	191	18	36	105	350
Africa (excluding Cameroon)	22	46	106	5	179
Europe	18	10	86	8	122
USA and Canada	13	0	29	2	44
Latin America and the Caribbean	0	5	6	0	11
Asia	0	8	6	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>720</b>

Table 14  
Conferences attended by responding grantees, grouped by source of funding and location of conference

During the five year period between 1995 and 1999, grantees in Cameroon generally attended between one and five conferences (Table 15) outside of their country, with the average for the entire group being five conferences.

## 5.5 Conclusion

Grantee personal livelihoods and professional opportunities are clearly affected by the broader economic difficulties affecting Cameroon. Low salaries for researchers mean that grantees find themselves working extra jobs as farmers and consultants in order to support their families. Most grantees are willing to take on additional consultancies to further improve their situation. At the same time, we see that most IFS grantees are dependent upon foreign sources of funding to carry out research. Recalling the contemporary state of the Cameroonian research environment as outlined in Chapter 2, where consultancy work and the demands of foreign funding agencies threaten to further erode the self sufficiency and self-determination of Cameroonian science, we see that IFS grantees are not unaffected.

In this context one can argue that IFS research grants increase the opportunities for Cameroonian researchers to determine and act upon the research priorities for their own country. Researchers that apply for IFS grants determine themselves what issue or problem they will address and what their research approach will be. The advantage to such openness is that it allows researchers the freedom to carry out projects that they deem to be most relevant to their own country. The funding agency does not determine the priorities.

Meanwhile, something that IFS does not do, that may have negative effects for grantees' research projects, is provide researchers with an honorarium or stipend. We see in Chapter 5 that lack of personal income is resulting in the diversion of grantees work from scientific activities to income generating activities.

No. of conferences	No. of grantees
0	5
1-5	31
6-10	10
11-15	1
> 15	1

Table 15  
Number of conferences outside Cameroon attended by respondents during a five year period (1995-1999)

The difficulties affecting grantees research opportunities are both financial and infra-structural. The national and international funds that are currently available to researchers in Cameroon do not provide the means to adequately overcome their challenges in purchasing, maintaining and repairing research equipment. Furthermore, the work of Cameroonian researchers is often obstructed by scientific isolation in the form of limited opportunities to forge new contacts with the international and national science communities. Opportunities to access their international colleagues' current research results in libraries, bibliographic databases and via the internet are limited, and often non-existent. In the next chapter, the related issue of grantees' own publication productivity will be analysed.

While Cameroonian scientists were able to attend a large number of national conferences using their own resources or national funding, they are almost entirely dependent upon foreign sources of support to take part in the international science community. Notably, IFS is responsible for sending more Cameroonian grantees to international conferences than are Cameroonian sources of research support.

The findings of this chapter indicate that current and former IFS grantees face many of the same challenges that are encountered by the general population of Cameroonian researchers. Funding, infrastructure and scientific isolation are key limiting factors in the Cameroonian research environment. These are the same obstacles that IFS support intends to ameliorate, and in Chapter 9 the performance of IFS in helping grantees to meet these challenges is evaluated.



## 6. Publication Outputs

The ultimate value of scientific research depends on its availability to the public, and the most common way of making research public is through publication. Publishing is at the heart of the scientific enterprise. In addition to its obvious importance for the distribution of information, publication is often used to measure a researcher's productivity and in many countries it is an important means for advancing a researcher's career. Likewise, publication is an important criterion for the promotion of scientists in Cameroon (See Chapter 8).

This chapter provides an overview of scientific publication in Cameroon, as well as a bibliometric analysis of a group of 49 IFS grantees in Cameroon.

### 6.1 Local science and international mainstream science

A distinction is often made between local science and mainstream science. Local science is scientific research that is primarily important within the context of a country or region, and consequently does not have great international visibility. Local science has implications for the solution of local problems. As a result, research findings are often made available through local journals and published in the language of the countries concerned. International, or mainstream, science has high visibility, and, because the findings are relevant for researchers across geographic boundaries, results are published mainly in international journals. The most common language for publication of international science is English. Despite the importance of local science, there is generally greater academic prestige associated with carrying out international science.

An often used measure of a scientist's performance is the quantity of their publications that are

indexed in international scientific publication databases. In particular, evaluators use the databases produced by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in the United States. The ISI databases of scientific publications cover some 5,700 journals from diverse fields of natural science, including approximately 3,500 contained in the Science Citation Index (SCI). Nevertheless, ISI is highly selective and screens only the world's most prestigious scientific journals (i.e. the ones whose articles are most frequently cited). SCI focuses on what has become known as "mainstream science," the most internationally visible science carried in the most highly cited journals, most of which are published in the North.

African mainstream scientific production is marginal compared to the rest of the world, and highly concentrated in two countries. The Republic of South Africa and Egypt together represent nearly half of the continent's production. Another group of five countries including Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Nigeria and Algeria account for a quarter (26%) of Africa's publication output. These countries are followed by a group of eight countries (Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe) that produce regularly between 70 and 180 papers a year (see Figure 13).

During the 1990s, Cameroon scientists authored or co-authored approximately 80-160 articles per year that were published in international journals. Over the last 15 years (1987-2001) 1632 such articles were published with Cameroonian authors or co-authors (on average 108 per year). In Africa, Cameroon ranks 11th with approximately 1,5% of the total African production of articles in mainstream journals. Despite constraints to research and publication described in chapter 2, Cameroon has tripled its scientific production during the last 15 years (see Figure 13).

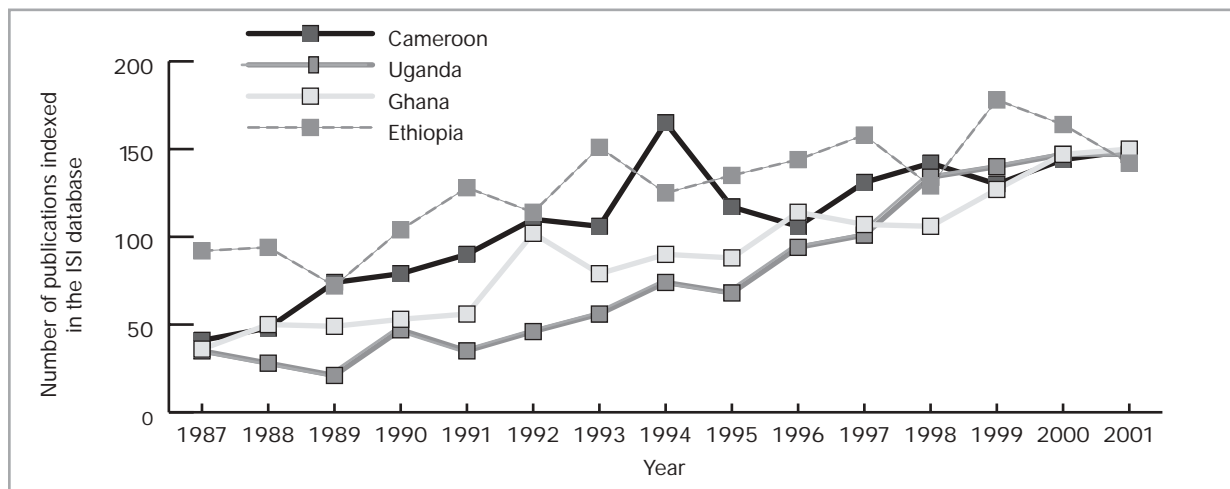


Figure 13

Annual production of ISI indexed publications by four African countries (1987-2001)

According to the ISI database, which does not track social science journals, a large share of the Cameroonian scientific production is within clinical medicine (39%), followed by biology (25%), biomedicine (11%), chemistry (10%) and physics (8%). Engineering accounts for 4% and earth sciences (mainly soil and environmental sciences) for 3%. This production originates from some 75 institutions in Cameroon, many of them being responsible for just one publication.

The University of Yaoundé (today University of Yaoundé I hosting the Faculty of Sciences) is by far the top producing institution and the top five institutions account for more than half of the total scientific outputs. In addition to the University of Yaoundé they include the French *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD), the Pasteur Institute, the Ministry of Public Health and the Universities of Dschang and Ngaoundéré. The very low visibility of IRAD can be partly explained by the fact that the ISI database tends to underestimate agricultural sciences. IRAD scientists tend to be more applied oriented than scientists from e.g. universities, and publish relatively less and in less visible journals than scientists in other disciplines.

While this study uses ISI databases to measure mainstream science, the authors do recognise the limitations of this measuring stick. Already in 1985, the question of adequately representing science produced in the developing world in international databases was the main point of discussion at a conference organized at ISI in Philadelphia. The final conference report, *Strengthening the Coverage of Third World Science*, pointed to a glaring

gap by stating that “the workshop participants estimated that about only half of the scientific output of the third world which meets international standards of excellence is included in the SCI” (Moravcsik 1985:3).

## 6.2 Bibliometric study of grantees in Cameroon

In 1999, requests for publications lists were sent to all present and former IFS grantees who were working, or had been working in Cameroon (69 grantees). Grantees who sent incomplete lists were encouraged to resubmit a complete list. Additional lists were also collected during interviews of grantees.

Most bibliometric studies concentrate on publication output in mainstream science. However, in order to measure the total publication output of grantees in Cameroon, this bibliometric study was not limited to only those publications found in the ISI databases. Instead, all scientific work produced by grantees in Cameroon, based upon data from grantees' complete publication lists, was included.

The complete bibliographical information (title, date, pages, publisher, etc.) of each reference in the publication list was recorded in a database. Entries were classified by publication type: journal article, full paper in conference/seminar proceedings, book chapter, grantee authored or edited book, abstract, report, and other research publications and communications. The latter is a broad category that includes material such as: posters, theses, bulletins,

booklets, monographs, movies, manuals, patents, maps, technical documents, and papers presented at seminars or conferences.

Of the 69 grantees, 49 participated in the survey by providing publication lists. Twenty-one of the publication lists were submitted by grantees that had concluded their IFS supported research project, and 28 were submitted by grantees with still ongoing projects. The overall rate of participation in the bibliometric study is very satisfactory (71%), however it is not known to what extent those grantees that did not respond are individuals who have published less often or not at all.

### 6.2.1 Total publication productivity

The 49 publications lists contained a total of 972 publications, of which 210 (22%) were identified as IFS supported publications. Individual grantees published between one and 84 publications, with a mean number of publications equalling twenty. On average, grantees produced 4.3 IFS supported publications (Table 16 shows grantee productivity).

No. of publications	No. of grantees	
	All publications	IFS supported publications
1 - 5	8	37
6 - 10	9	5
11 - 15	7	4
16 - 20	8	2
21 - 30	8	1
31 - 40	3	0
41 - 50	3	0
51 - 60	2	0
61 - 70	0	0
71 - 80	0	0
81 - 90	1	0
<b>(mean)</b>	<b>(19.8)</b>	<b>(4.3)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>210</b>

Table 16  
Publication productivity of individual grantees

The average number of total publications and IFS publications per grantee for each year before and after the first grant was awarded are provided in Figure 14. Figure 14 indicates that grantees' peak in publication production generally occurs around three to four years after their first grant

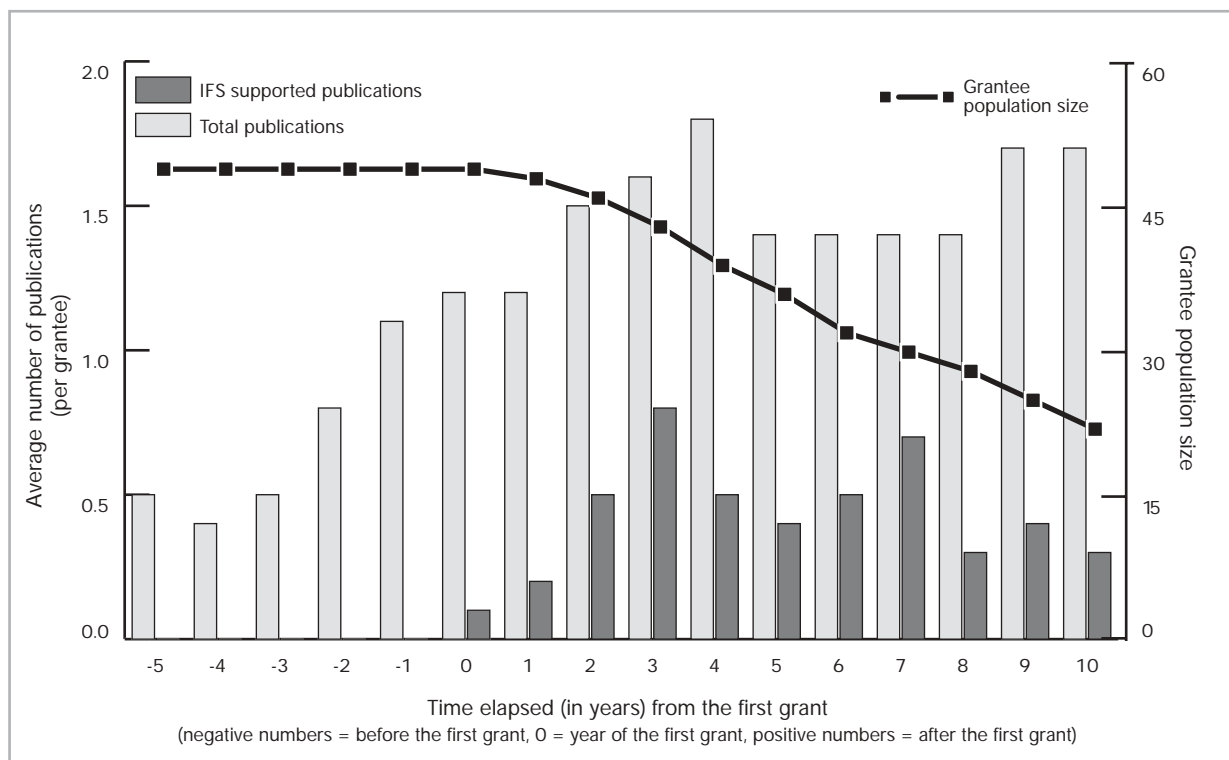


Figure 14  
Average yearly publication output in relation to the time of the award of the first grant

Publication type	Total No.	Total No. IFS supported	Percent of Total that was IFS supported
Journal Articles	537	117	22%
Paper in Conference Proceedings	133	37	28%
Other Publications	205	38	19%
Abstracts	43	5	12%
Report	37	5	14%
Book Chapters	13	7	54%
Books	4	1	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>22%</b>

Table 17  
IFS supported publications and total publications by type

was awarded. This peak coincides with a peak in IFS supported publications. Following the peak, grantee publication declines slightly but remains near peak levels for the following six years.

Table 17 shows the break-down of all publications by type. The most common type of publication was a journal article, followed by a full paper in a conference or seminar proceedings.

### 6.2.2 Journal article productivity

After segregating the publications by type, it was found that the publication lists contained 537 journal articles (55% of all publications) published in 181 different journals. A total of 23 journals had five or more articles by IFS grantees (Table 18), and these accounted for over one-half of all journal articles published by IFS grantees. Grantees credited 117 journal articles directly to IFS support (this represents slightly more than one half of all IFS supported publications).

Of the 537 journal articles authored or co-authored by IFS grantees, 253 (47%) appeared in journals that appear on the ISI master list. In fact, the ISI listed journals *Phytochemistry* and the *Journal of Natural Products* were the two journals that have contained the greatest numbers of IFS grantee publications. As discussed above, journals indexed in the information services provided by ISI such as *Science Citation Index* and *Current Contents*, are considered to represent the mainstream of international scientific publication.

IFS supported research resulted in 67 articles by grantees that were published in ISI listed journals. This represents 26% of all grantee publication in international mainstream journals, and 57% of all

journal articles that resulted from IFS supported research.

Meanwhile, IFS grantees also continue to publish results in local journals. While publications in local journals are less important for the career advancement

of scientists in Cameroon (see Chapter 8), they are important outlets for disseminating research results that are relevant to a limited, local audience. The *Revue Sciences et Techniques, Série Sciences Agronomiques*, the *Revue Science et Technique, Série Sciences Santé*, the *Cameroon Bulletin of Animal Production*, and the *Cameroon Journal of Biological and Biochemical Sciences* are each local journals in Cameroon that have been important outlets for grantees' research results (see Table 18 for others).

### 6.2.3 Co-authorship and collaboration

IFS provides incentives in the form of research grants to individual scientists while recognising that through collaboration scientists generally achieve their best results. Grantees' patterns of collaboration suggest that the individual nature of the IFS grant does not hinder scientists from working in teams. Of the 117 journal articles that grantees gave credit to IFS for supporting, 97 (83%) were co-authored. Co-authorship was the norm for all articles produced by IFS grantees, only 16% had single authors.

It is a general characteristic of scientific production in Cameroon that it is highly dependent on international collaboration. Two-thirds of the articles appearing in mainstream journals are published in collaboration with foreign authors. Foreign co-authors are predominantly from France where the scientists from Cameroon have been often been trained and to a lesser extent from the US, the UK and Germany (see Figure 15). A limited number of the co-authored articles are published in collaboration with scientists from other African countries (mostly Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger). Overall, collaborations with European scientists account for 67%, while Africa represents 11% and Asia 2% only.

Periodical title	No of grantee publications	ISI Journal?	Place of publication
Phytochemistry	60	Yes	United Kingdom
Journal of Natural Products	34	Yes	USA
Fruits	24		France
Revue Sciences et Techniques, Série Sciences Agronomiques	24		Cameroon
Revue Science et Technique, Série Sciences Santé	16		Cameroon
Cameroon Bulletin of Animal Production	10		Cameroon
Planta Medica	9	Yes	Germany
Cameroon Journal of Biological and Biochemical Sciences	9		Cameroon
Cahiers Agricultures	9		France
Tropicultura	8		Belgium
Biosciences Proceedings	8		Cameroon
World Review of Animal Production	7		Italy
Fitoterapia	6	Yes	Italy
Journal of Ethnopharmacology	6	Yes	Ireland
Tetrahedron Letters	6	Yes	United Kingdom
Tropical Medicine and Parasitology (Tropenmedizin und Parasitologie)	6		Germany
Journal of the Chemical Society - Perkin Transactions 1	6		United Kingdom
Ann Fac Sc Chim	6		Cameroon
Animal Feed Science and Technology	5	Yes	The Netherlands
Biochimica et Biophysica Acta	5	Yes	USA
Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture	5	Yes	United Kingdom
Phytomedicine	5	Yes	Germany
Sciences Agronomiques et Développement	5		Cameroon

Table 18  
Journals in which there have appeared five or more articles by IFS grantees in Cameroon

The bibliometric survey did not have data available regarding the nationality of grantee collaborators. However, information obtained during the interviews of grantees indicates that when collabora-

tors were not Cameroonian, the publications were often derived from a PhD thesis produced outside Cameroon and the collaborators were former PhD supervisors or colleagues.

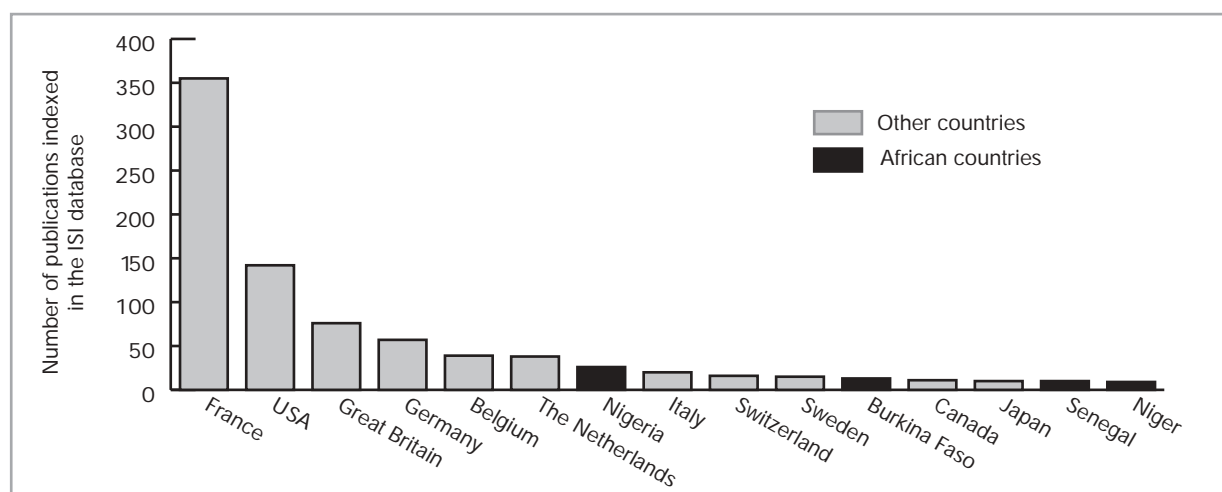


Figure 15  
Cameroonian scientists and international collaboration: Top 15 collaborating countries

### 6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter we see that the most common type of publication by Cameroonian scientists that have participated in the IFS programme is a co-authored journal article. Of these, a about half are published in international mainstream journals, while the others are published in local journals. We also see that IFS support for research projects is credited for the production of, on average, slightly more than one-fifth of each scientists' publication record. This is a very positive result indicating that Cameroo-

nian grantees continue to be productive and to publish after the IFS support is terminated.

The publication trends among IFS grantees in Cameroon that are documented in this chapter suggest that IFS support has had a positive impact on the productivity of grantees. Furthermore, this study indicates that IFS has succeeded in identifying and supporting young scientists that continue to be productive members of their scientific community long after the conclusion of the IFS grant.

## 7. IFS research project completion

In this chapter we will consider IFS grantees who have finished their IFS supported research. Since IFS began its activities in Cameroon up until the first half of 2003, 47 researchers have won research support from IFS and later had their support terminated. This group of 47 have received a total of 79 IFS research grants (see Table 19 for an indication of how they were distributed). Nearly half (47%) of all former grantees in Cameroon received at least one renewal grant.

Research projects are expected to have durations of between one and three years. In reality, however, the projects of grantees in Cameroon tend to be longer in duration. The average amount of time that passes between the moment that a grant is awarded to a researcher in Cameroon and the moment that IFS officially terminates its active support of the research project is five years. The total time that a researcher receives active support from IFS can be much longer if they receive multiple research grants, the longest being 16 years. Meanwhile, grantees that received multiple grants for multiple projects tended to have a shorter project duration (4.2 years) than did grantees that only received one research grant (5.6 years). The tendency of projects to extend beyond the three year limitation has also been noticed in other parts of Africa (Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg, 2002, and Gaillard and F Tullberg 2001).

A number of factors can explain the duration of IFS research projects. Grantees have reported difficulties in obtaining supplies, administrative dif-

iculties, unforeseen obstacles to their research, personal crises and unstable political situations, among other factors that have slowed the progress of their research. In such cases, IFS strives to find solutions to solvable problems, and to provide extensions whenever necessary. In addition, the IFS staff prefer to close grantee files upon receipt of a final report (see below). However, final reports are delinquent with some frequency, thus causing files to be kept open long after the actual project has been completed.

As has been shown in previous chapters, Cameroonian grantees live in a context where salaries are insufficient to meet the needs of their families, and where time must be invested where it is likely to result in improved livelihoods. Given this situation, IFS must develop strategies for increasing the timeliness and quality of reports that do not impede grantees' work (i.e. with-holding a portion of the grant meant for research). IFS is addressing this challenge with two supporting services to grantees. First, a mentorship programme has been initiated that will link IFS Advisers to grantees and support grantees in the writing of their final reports and scientific articles at the conclusion of their IFS supported research project. Secondly, a new strategy is being implemented in 2003, whereby completed final reports of satisfactory quality are acknowledged with a travel grant to be used for the researchers further professional development and the dissemination of their research results (i.e. at an international scientific conference). Future impact assessments will be able to analyse the impact of these recent initiatives.

No. of research grants awarded	No. of researchers
One grant	25
Two grants	10
Three grants	9
Four grants	2

Table 19  
Number of research grants awarded to individual grantees in Cameroon

There are a number of reasons for closing a grantees' file (i.e. "closing a grant") at the IFS Secretariat (see Box 8). Table 20 shows the different reason for closing the files of 47 grantees in Cameroon. IFS has had greater success in obtaining final reports and renewal applications than was the case in Tanzania (Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg, 2002), where roughly one third of grantees did not submit a

**Box 8**  
**Closing a file**

Reasons for closing a file include:

- The project was never started. For example, occasionally a new grantee wins a fellowship to a university in the North before beginning the research and must therefore decline the grant.
- The project was completed with a final report. This is the ideal reason for closing a grant.
- A grantee's renewal application was not approved (in many cases because the grantee is too established in his/her research career).
- The project is terminated by IFS. For example, a grantee might be promoted/moved to an administrative position and is unable to complete the project.
- The project is completed, but the grantee fails to submit a final report despite reminders.
- A grantee dies.

Reason for closing	No of grantees
Closed with partial report	3
Grantee deceased prior to project completion	3
Closed without report	6
Project terminated	1
Renewal not approved	18
Closed with report	15
Not started	1

Table 20  
Closed files in Cameroon

Quality	Percent of final reports
Unsatisfactory	6%
Mediocre	6%
Satisfactory	47%
Good	29%
Excellent	12%

Table 21  
Quality of final reports received from grantees in Cameroon

renewal application or a final report. In Cameroon only six projects (13%) were closed without final reports. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the new mentorship and travel grant strategies will further reduce this number.

Each final report that is received by IFS is reviewed by a Scientific Advisory Committee with expertise in the grantee's field of research. The committee grades the quality of the report, and if necessary requests improvements be made by the grantee. Most final reports submitted by grantees in Cameroon have been satisfactory or better (Table 21).



## 8. Grantee advancement and mobility

The MESIA Project is an important tool for IFS for keeping track of the activities of grantees following the completion of their IFS supported project. In this chapter the academic and professional advancement of current and former grantees in Cameroon is documented, as well as the international circulation of Cameroonian grantees. Information regarding the advancement and movement of former grantees is essential for the evaluation of the impact of IFS support in supporting the careers of young scientists and the strengthening of capacity in developing countries.

### 8.1 Academic progression

Information on the academic progression of 54 grantees was available for this impact assessment (Figure 16). Five of the six grantees who had a BSc level at the time of their first grant progressed from BSc to PhD and one from BSc to MSc. Similarly, nearly two-thirds of the grantees having a MSc at the time of their first grant progressed from MSc to PhD. Today none of these grantees have a BSc level and the large majority (77%) have a PhD level. These are very positive achievements that can be attributed to IFS support to the extent that the academic degrees were obtained based upon the IFS supported research projects.

Fourteen grantees have also reported post-doctoral visits during the time they were supported by IFS. Out of the 14, three reported having two or more visits. Half of the post-docs took place in Cameroon. Two post-docs took place in France, two in Sweden, and one post-doc took place in Kenya, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, respectively.

### 8.2 Promotion

Surveys and interviews conducted during the course of this impact assessment indicate that IFS has been successful at identifying and supporting

#### Box 9

##### IFS grantees: science leaders

An explicit objective of the IFS Granting Programme is to identify and support promising scientists that will likely become the science leaders of the future in their country. During the course of the MESIA Impact Study, correspondences, interviews and tracer studies revealed that IFS had been successful in this regard in Cameroon. Positions held currently or in the past by IFS grantees include:

- Minister of Science and Technology, Cameroon
- Director General, *Institut de Recherche pour la Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement* (IRAD)
- Director, *Institut de Recherche Médicale et Plantes Médicinales* (IRMEPM)
- Director, Limbe Botanical Garden
- Vice Rector, University of Buea
- Vice Rector, University of Dschang
- Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Yaoundé I

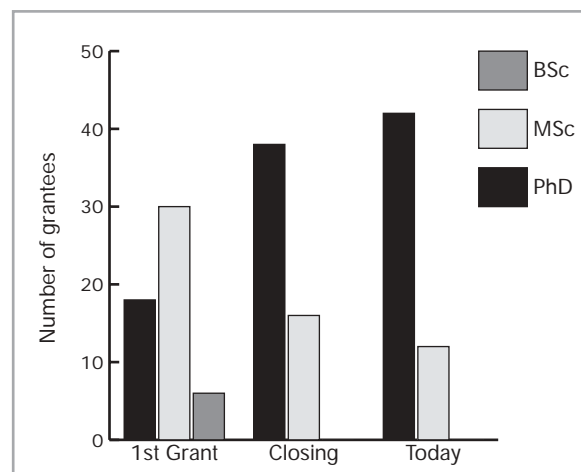


Figure 16  
Academic progression of IFS grantees

the scientists that later become science leaders in Cameroon. IFS support contributed to grantees being promoted to positions of leadership in universities, research institutes, and in at least one case, politics<sup>1</sup> (see Box 9).

An objective of the MESIA project is to learn from grantees which factors are most important for advancing to positions of leadership. The MESIA questionnaire asked Cameroonian scientists to rate the importance of eight different criteria for the promotion of scientists in their country (see Figures 17 and 18). While in Tanzania it was found that there were clear differences between grantees working in research institutes and those working in universities (Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg 2002), in Cameroon the differences were marginal. Grantees generally agreed that publications in international journals was the single most important criteria for promotion, followed by publication in local journals and seniority. Contribution to teaching was of moderate importance for promotion at universities, and of little importance at research institutes. Award of research grants was not an important direct contributing factor for promotion, but to the extent that research grants improve a researchers opportunity to publish they are important for career advancement.

### 8.3 Mobility

Questions 12 and 13 of the MESIA Questionnaire asked grantees to report on the amount of time that they have spent outside of Cameroon for higher education and training (including postdoctoral studies and academic visits), and the total time they have spent abroad for all reasons during their lifetime. Their answers reveal that Cameroonian grantees spend very little time outside of Cameroon for non-academic reasons. Grantees spent an average of 3.6 years abroad for academic reasons (see Figure 19 for the distribution), and 4.2 years abroad in total.

At the time that a grantee is conducting an IFS sponsored research project, he or she is expected to be attached to a university or research institution in a developing countries. After completing their IFS research grants, and sometimes before, grantees have found new positions both locally and internationally. As illustrated in Box 10 (see page 50), very few grantees are “true cases of brain drain”. Out of 84 grantees, only 3 are working in North America today. The three of them maintain

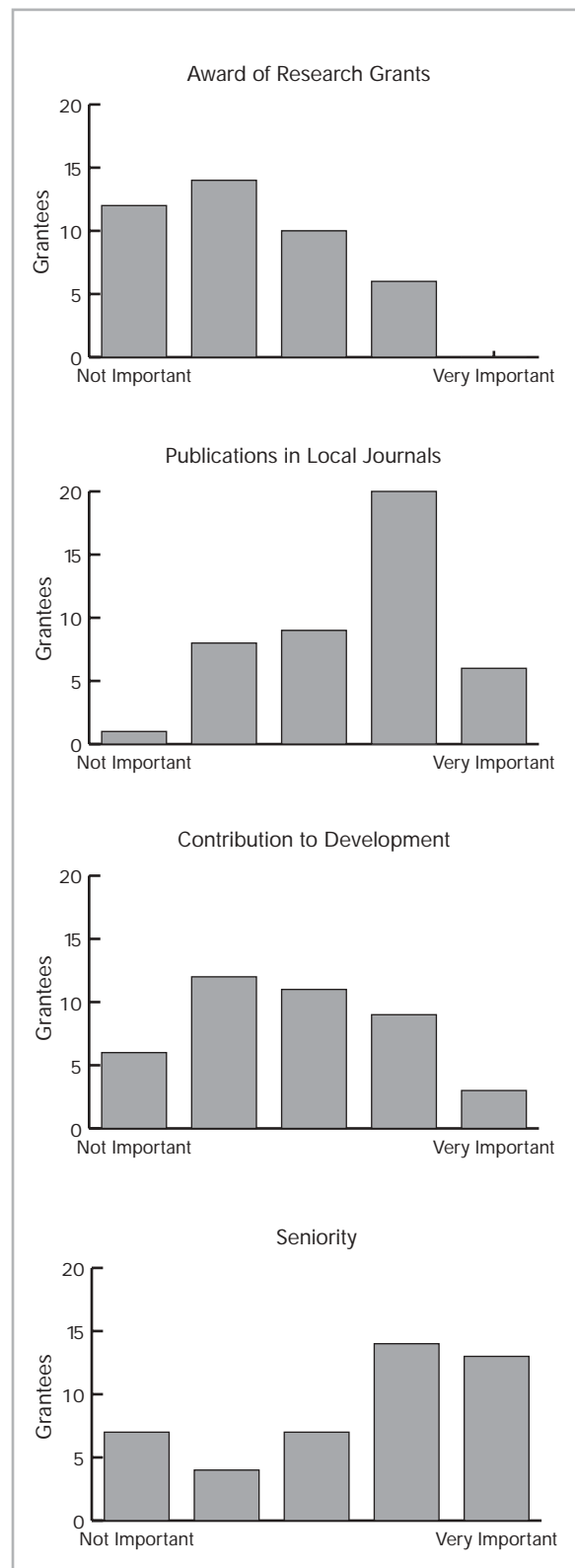


Figure 17  
Importance of criteria for the promotion of scientists in Cameroon (part 1)

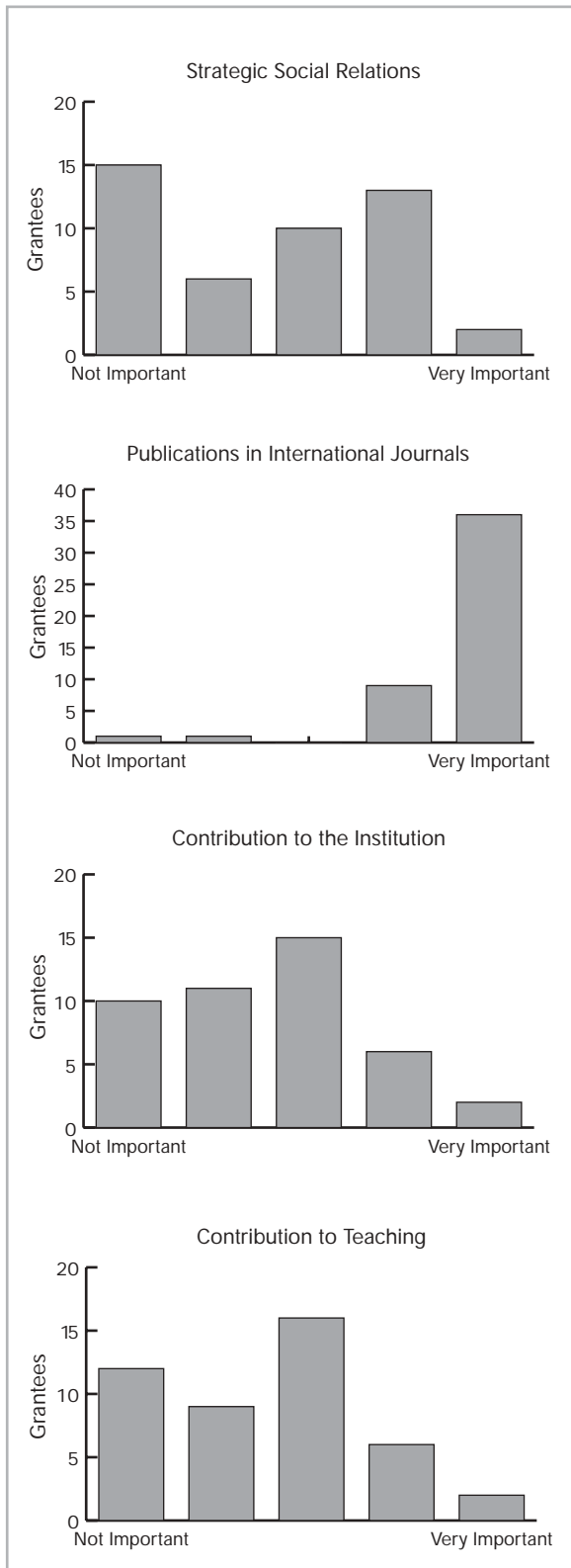


Figure 18  
Importance of criteria for the promotion of scientists in Cameroon (part 2)

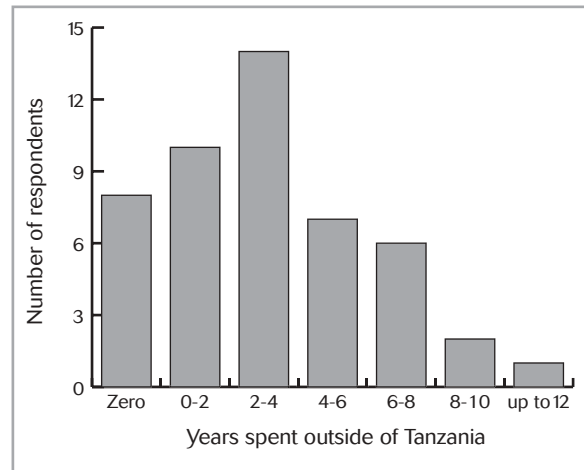


Figure 19  
Years spent outside Cameroon for higher education and training

contact with their colleagues back at home and at least one, presently in Canada, is likely to come back once his post-doc is completed in Canada. The former grantee that is Assistant Professor at Delaware State University is setting up his lab to work on the molecular biology of cassava viruses and looks forward to continued collaborating with IFS and IFS grantees. The four other foreign jobs are (or were) on the African continent and include responsibilities for regional and continent-wide research and training programmes.

In the course of this tracer study we also discovered that more grantees had just returned from training abroad with a PhD or were abroad for further training (short term, PhD or post-doc). For grantees that remain in Cameroon, it should be noted that circulation between the different centres of IRAD or between the University of Yaoundé I and the newly established universities in the Provinces seems to occur quite frequently. This internal mobility is often accompanied by a promotion.

A number of IFS grantees, while remaining in Cameroon, have accepted employment opportunities or part time consultancies offered by private companies, NGOs or international organizations (see also Chapter 5). Nevertheless, with the exception of one grantee that left his job at IRAD to join the World Wild Fund for Nature in Cameroon, all of these grantees have at the same time maintained their affiliation with a national institute. For example, one grantee continued to teach at Dschang University while he was director of a livestock programme sponsored by UNDP. This perceptible trend is characteristic of what we found elsewhere

in Africa (Gaillard and Furó Tullberg, 2001): scientific research is shifting from academic domain to the domain of consultancy and development.

## 8.4 Conclusion

This chapter shows that Cameroonian scientists that have participated in the IFS small grants programme are mobile, both in terms of academic and professional promotion, professional changes and circulation. Academic degrees were most often based upon the IFS supported research projects.

Overall, it is an encouraging result that very few grantees are true cases of brain drain. Out of 84 grantees, only three have left Africa (USA and

Canada). The remaining four are part of a continental circulation of scientists in Africa and they may eventually come back, as did the former Minister of Science and Technology who spent most of his academic career at the University of Bordeaux in France. Most of these grantees have maintained strong links to Cameroon.

IFS' mission in Cameroon has been to target promising young researchers for support and facilitated their research and the establishment of their careers. The information obtained for this study suggests that IFS has been successful in meeting this objective as evidenced by the continued activities of former IFS grantees in the Cameroonian national scientific community.

### Box 10

#### The brain drain or regional circulation?

Capacity for the production and utilisation of scientific knowledge is understood by IFS to be one of the many prerequisites for local and regional development. Hence, one of the primary goal of IFS is to reduce the brain drain by providing incentives and means for scientists to remain in their country and to contribute to the building of a critical mass of local scientific expertise. Of the 84 grantees in Cameroon, seven left their country for an important portion of their scientific career (five years or more). However, it is insufficient to classify all seven cases as cases of brain drain. While a few may remain permanently abroad, it is easily argued that most of these individuals are not true cases of brain drain, but in fact contribute, through their circulation, to regional or continental development in Africa. Most often, these latter individuals became science leaders in Africa. The list below indicates where the seven grantees went, and, when information is available, what position they held in those places.

- The Scripps Research Institute, International Laboratory for Tropical Biotechnology, California, USA.  
Post-doc, Cornell University, USA.  
Assistant Professor, Delaware State University, USA
- University of Michigan, USA.
- Post-doc, University in Canada.
- Coordinator, IPGRI, Sub-Saharan Forest Genetic (SAFORGEN) Programme, Cotonou, Benin.
- Director, African Agency for Biotechnology, Alger, Algeria.
- Société de Commercialisation des Productions des Industries Chimiques (SENCHEM), Senegal.
- Ecole Inter-Etats de Génie Rural, CILSS, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

#### Chapter Notes

<sup>1</sup> Secretary General of the Social Democratic Front, one of the leading party in the opposition.

## 9. An assessment of IFS support

It is essential for the success of IFS that the organisation have an understanding of what the needs of its grantees are, and what effect the provision of IFS support has for the amelioration of those needs. In previous chapters we have identified research funding, access to working research equipment, and access to the international community through conferences, internet and libraries as key constraints to the work of researchers in Cameroon. At the same time we have seen that the advancement of researchers careers in Cameroon are heavily dependent upon international and local publications, areas where IFS grantees have been successful. In this chapter we present grantees' own evaluation of the quality of support provided by IFS.

### 9.1 Relative importance of IFS support

In an effort to understand the importance of IFS support to grantees' research, they were asked to indicate whether or not they would have been able to carry-out their research without IFS funding. Of 48 grantees, twelve (25%) would not have been able to carry out research without IFS support. An additional 26 (52%) would have been able to carry out a similar research project, but it would have been on a reduced scale. Seven grantees reported that they would have been able to carry out research projects, however they would not have been the same projects. Two grantees would have been able to find support from elsewhere and one would have been able to carry out the research without support. In sum, 45 of 48 projects would not have been carried out, or would have been carried out differently if IFS support were not available.

When one examines the importance of IFS support to researchers' work in the context of the changing Cameroonian research infrastructure in the early 1990s, it is clear that the importance of IFS support has increased as the local research infrastructure has weakened (See Box 11). In 1992

the economic crisis that had begun in 1989 fully impacted the Cameroonian research infrastructure: university budgets were slashed and salaries and research budgets withered (see Chapter 2 for a description). Meanwhile, grantees that received their first grants during and after 1992 reported more frequently that they were entirely dependent upon IFS support than did grantees that received first grants prior to 1992 (Figure 20). Of the 25 researchers receiving first grants between 1992 and 1999, nine would not have been able to carry out their research without IFS support. In comparison, only three of 23 reported this level of dependence for the period before 1992. The three grantees that reported having other means available to support their research were awarded first grants in the 1970s or 1980s.

### 9.2 An assessment of IFS support

To assess the IFS mode of work and support, grantees in Cameroon were asked to rate 13 activities from "selection process" to "follow-up activities once support was terminated" using a numerical

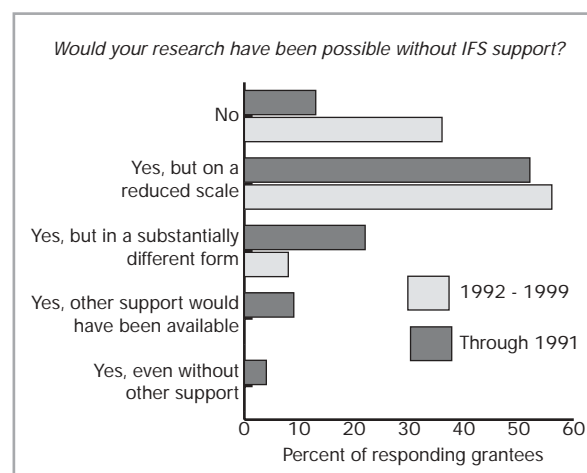


Figure 20  
Importance of IFS support to grantees research: before and after 1992

scale from one to five: unacceptable (1), poor (2), satisfactory (3), good (4), or excellent (5). The comparison of the different activities can help to identify areas that deserve strengthening and areas that are problematic for grantees (Figure 21 and Table 22).

IFS received the most appreciation for the manner in which it administers its research grants. A majority of respondents graded the IFS as excellent in this regard and all respondents were at least satisfied. The IFS selection process, the service whereby IFS purchases and ships research equipment, monitor-

ing and follow-up of research projects, and contact with the IFS staff also received high marks from grantees in Cameroon. IFS workshops were also rated highly, although a small minority did rate them as unsatisfactory (5 of 43).

Areas of mixed success in which 65% to 80% of grantees were satisfied included providing access to literature, providing access to further research training, providing scientific counselling, and providing additional networking opportunities. While the rates of approval for these categories are considered good by the IFS secretariat, they are at the

#### Box 11

##### Scientific research capacity in Cameroon and IFS : a grantee's view-point

The most acute developmental challenges Cameroon currently faces are in the health and education sectors. Our government recognizes that our development and growth cannot be fully achieved without inputs from the higher education and scientific research. When well managed, these tools could bring about improvement of the economic development through better planning of the nation's development process especially as far as industrialization is concerned. They are also indispensable for the betterment of the quality of life through better crop production, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, etc.

In the 1980s, when I was a university student, Cameroon enjoyed better scientific research capacity as evidenced by the availability of well equipped laboratories and research centres. The working conditions were also good. Researchers, university teachers and research personnel, as I can remember, enjoyed meaningful salaries and incentives. This situation led to a better training of graduate students and provided us with a solid background that enabled some of us to compete efficiently for international scholarship offers. Needless to say, this played a major role in my deciding to become a scientist.

Due to the economic crisis experienced by Cameroon in the nineties, public research budgets were cut to such an extent that with a few exceptions, hardly any research can be undertaken without foreign aid. With the advent of the economic revival, new attention is being focused on scientific research as evidenced by the set-up in 1998 of the national competitive research grant schemes, code named FUAR (*Fonds Universitaire d'Apui à la Recherche*) at the University of Yaoundé I, and the presidential decrees aimed at improving the working and living conditions of researchers and teachers. Although these efforts are very laudable, they are still inadequate as far as the research infrastructure is concerned. It is in this area that the impact of the International Foundation for Science (IFS) is most felt. Thanks to its policy to assist individual researchers, most IFS grantees have been able to remain in activity both by working on specific topics and by training graduate students in their various institutions. In this context, I can serve as illustration of the impact of IFS support in Cameroon: since my first grant in 1996, I have been able to develop a relatively new discipline, eco-toxicology, within the laboratory of General Biology in the department of Animal Biology and Physiology of the Faculty of Science of the University of Yaoundé I. Together with my second grant in 2001, I have trained more than a dozen graduate students, published more than 10 journal articles and presented more than 15 communications at national and international conferences in eco-toxicology and related fields. The number of graduate students interested in eco-toxicological studies has been growing steadily. Thanks to this significant scientific production, I was able to successfully secure a post-doc training in soil eco-toxicology and environmental chemistry at the Institute of Environmental Research (INFU) at the University of Dortmund in Germany, with a research fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Germany.

All this would not have happened without the input from IFS. It is my wish that Cameroonian researchers will continue to receive support from IFS so as to boost the current governmental effort in scientific research recovery.

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same time striving to improve them. For example, workshops have been held in Africa together with scientists and technicians to determine how best to support the maintenance and repair of scientific equipment. A new service offered in partnership

with the Swedish Agricultural University (SLU) assists grantees to obtain abstracts and bibliographies of the most recent research articles published in their area of interest. Meanwhile, a strengthened Mentorship Programme is drawing upon the

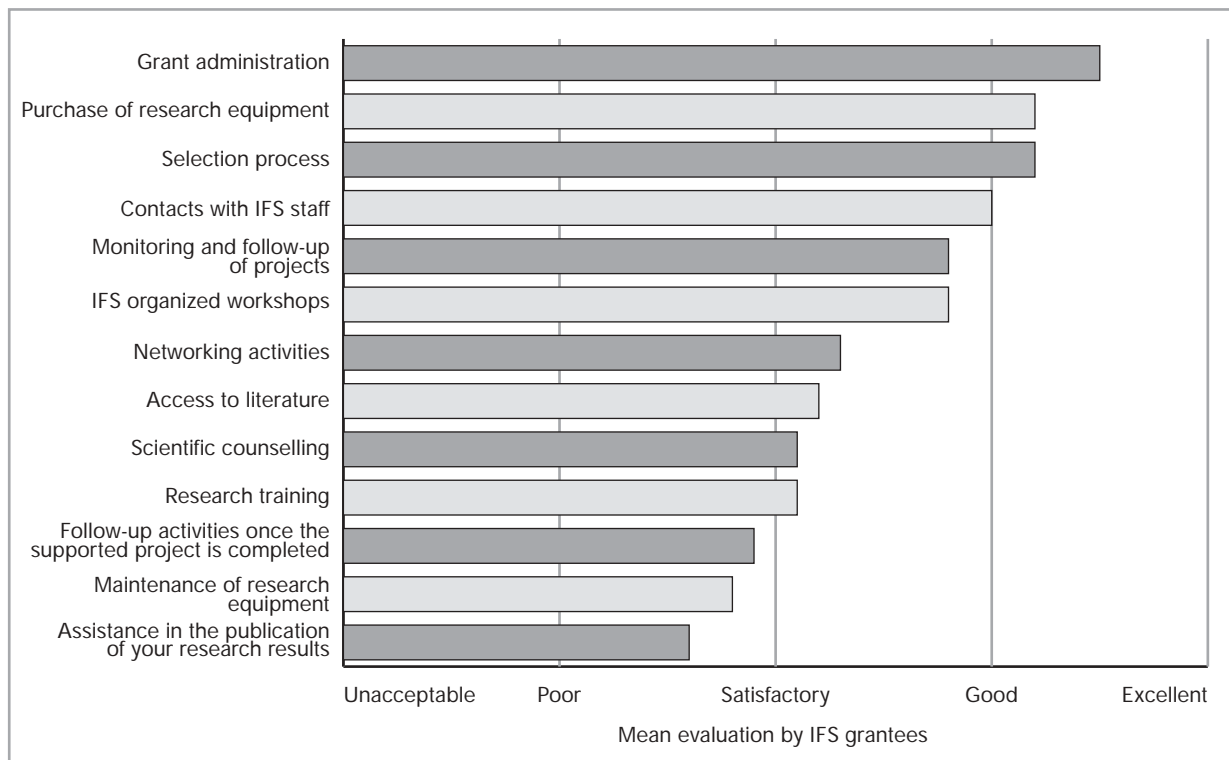


Figure 21  
Grantees' mean assessment of the IFS mode of work and support

Services	No. of grantee responses				
	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Selection process	0	0	8	20	16
Grant administration	0	0	3	16	27
Monitoring and follow-up of projects	0	2	13	21	9
Contacts with IFS staff	1	2	6	22	15
Purchase of research equipment	0	2	7	13	21
Maintenance of research equipment	4	9	19	6	2
Access to literature	0	10	19	10	5
Research training	0	11	17	11	2
Scientific counselling	0	11	15	15	1
IFS organized workshops	0	5	11	14	13
Networking activities	0	11	14	9	8
Assistance in the publication of your research results	1	20	8	6	1
Follow-up activities once the supported project is terminated	2	10	9	4	3

Table 22  
Grantee assessments of the IFS mode of work and support

resources of the IFS Scientific Advisors to provide scientific counselling and to assist grantees in the improvement of their research projects. Furthermore, new joint initiatives such as the UNU/IAS – IFS Agriculture for Peace Fellowship and the CODESRIA – IFS Sustainable Agriculture Initiative are organising more opportunities for grantees to both network with other researchers and improve their research skills.

More than 25% of the grantees surveyed were critical of IFS for not sufficiently supporting the maintenance of research equipment. Recognising the equipment maintenance is an important hindrance to research among grantees, IFS has revived its efforts to respond to this problem. In Buea, Cameroon on November 5th – 8th, 2002 an international workshop was organised by IFS together with a national and international organisations, and businesses on the topic of “Purchasing, Servicing and Maintenance of Scientific Equipment in Western Africa.” The workshop brought together stakeholders from the region to discuss and plan activities to improve the state of research equipment in Western Africa.

Other areas where grantees have been critical of IFS support are assistance in the publication of their research results and follow-up activities once IFS support is terminated. Here grantees have correctly identified areas where IFS has traditionally been weak. Furthermore, in the case of providing assistance in the publication of research results, they have also identified an area that can be crucial to the future success of grantees as shown by Figure 18 in the previous chapter.

IFS is responding to the criticism that it does not sufficiently support its grantees to publish their research with a number of different approaches. First, many Scientific Advisors have volunteered to assist grantees in the production of a manuscript for publication. Implementation of this resource is only beginning in 2003, so the extent to which it can meet grantees’ needs cannot yet be evaluated. IFS is also beginning to award travel grants to grantees that produce high quality publications/

final reports based upon the results of their IFS supported work. Improvements in the support provided for the publication of research results can be seen as a significant improvement in the level of support provided to researchers in developing countries such as Cameroon.

The new strategy for awarding travel grants may also go part-way in addressing the criticism that IFS does not sufficiently follow-up with grantees once support is terminated. Furthermore, continued studies such as this one are important follow-up activities for addressing the needs and experiences of both former and current grantees.

### 9.3 Conclusion

Grantees’ responses indicate that the need for IFS support in the research community is growing in Cameroon as the local infrastructure deteriorates. The percentage of grantees with projects that could not be carried out without IFS support has risen from levels similar to those found in Mexico (Gaillard et al 2001) to levels that are greater than the average for all of Africa (Gaillard and F Tullberg, 2000). While dependency on IFS in this respect has not yet equalled the levels reported for Tanzania (Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg, 2002), they indicate that Cameroon is a country where the need for IFS support is great.

IFS received highest marks for its core activities of selecting grantees, administering research grants and providing support in the purchase of research activities. Furthermore, its supporting activities were also appreciated by grantees and many are being further improved. In Cameroon, assistance in the publication of research results is an area where IFS should be stronger according to grantees, and it is an area that has direct consequences for the future advancement of grantees research careers. Future studies should evaluate grantee satisfaction with new programmes recently implemented by IFS to address the need for further publication support.



## 10. Science, society and grantees' career goals

In earlier chapters we have seen that public appreciation of researchers has eroded in Cameroon due at least partially to shrinking opportunities to carry out research for the public good. Meanwhile, we have also seen that researchers are increasingly forced to consider alternative sources of income to guarantee their livelihoods. In this brief chapter we present grantees own views regarding the role of research(ers) in Cameroon, and their own personal career goals.

Grantees in Cameroon were given 11 statements concerning the role of science and scientists in society and were asked to assign a score from 1 (meaning that they disagreed completely with the statement) to 5 (indicating complete agreement) to each statement. Table 23 summarises their responses.

While the public may doubt the role of science in improving the lives of Cameroonians, Cameroonian scientists strongly believe that science contributes to development. They are also in general agreements that science should lead to innovations and goods. These values do not inhibit Cameroo-

nian scientists from also believing that scientific knowledge is universal and that the production of knowledge is a legitimate goal in itself.

Despite the difficulties encountered by researchers in Cameroon, 31 of 47 grantees indicated that they have a national scientific career as one of their career goals (see Table 24). Slightly more than half indicated that they would like to work with foreign or international organisations. Other careers were

Career choice	Percentage of grantees
National scientific career	66%
Career with foreign or international organisations	51%
Career in administration	13%
Own consultancy or medical practice	11%
Career within national development programmes	6%
Career in politics	4%
Private business	4%

Table 24  
Future career goals of IFS grantees in Cameroon

Value statements	No. of grantees responding					Average
	Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Agree 5	
Science contributes to development	0	0	1	6	40	4.8
Scientific knowledge is universal	1	0	3	4	36	4.7
Science should firstly produce knowledge	2	1	6	17	21	4.1
Science should mainly lead to useful innovations	1	3	9	12	21	4.1
Researchers should have entrepreneurial and managerial skills	1	5	9	14	17	3.9
Researchers should produce goods for a competitive market	4	5	7	12	18	3.8
Science is public knowledge	2	6	11	10	12	3.6
Researchers are free to choose their own research topics	1	8	16	9	13	3.5
Research topics are set by clients	3	6	14	15	8	3.4
Research topics are set by sponsors	8	4	17	11	7	3.1
Research topics are set by employers	8	8	14	12	3	2.9

Table 23  
Grantee responses to eleven value statements

of much less interest to the grantee population as a whole.

A national scientific career was of more interest to grantees in Cameroon than it was to grantees in Africa in general (43%). However, if one compares the situation in Cameroon to a country with a strong national science and technology infrastructure such as Mexico, it is clear that a national career is less attractive to researchers (66% in Cameroon compared to 83% in Mexico).

In sum, it is clear that in Cameroon the grantee population is generally committed to science in their country, and believes that research can play an important role in the further development of the nation. However, with more than 50% of grantees having a career with international organisations as one of their career goals, the grantee population is also vulnerable to the brain drain if the circumstances of researchers in Cameroon do not improve.

#### Box 12

##### The role of IFS support in my research career

I applied for an IFS grant in December 2000, one year after I obtained my PhD from the University of Hannover, Germany with honours (*magna cum laude*). The topic was 'Towards developing an integrated crop management strategy for the African stemborer, *Busseola fusca* (Fuller) in maize systems in Cameroon'. The recommendations ensuing from the thesis was a plan for further research into Integrated Pest Management (IPM) options for lepidopterous maize borers in Cameroon, mainly habitat management (use of trap plants, management of natural habitats; intercropping with non-host plants and soil nutrients) and biological control solutions (augmentation, expanding the geographic range of indigenous natural enemies' species or strains, use of viruses).

I then wrote a proposal on biodiversity and biological control of *Busseola fusca*, the predominant stemborer species in Cameroon which IFS is currently funding. The goal is to investigate how disturbed habitats in the forest zone can be managed in order to lower borer pressure in maize fields by increasing the proportion of trap plants and efficacy of borer natural enemies. My thesis supervisor at Hannover also wrote a proposal on the effect of intercropping and soil fertility technologies on the population dynamics of stemborer pests and their natural enemies as well as maize yields in the forest zone of Cameroon. The work is being funded by the German Research Council (DFG) and carried out as part of a PhD programme at the University of Hannover.

We started implementing both projects in January 2002. As part of our vision for the future, we have developed another research project proposal, this time on an international scale involving other African countries, International Agricultural Research Centres and the University of Hannover. The goal is to assess, evaluate and validate either singly or in combination and in both on-station and on-farm farmer participatory trials the various IPM technologies developed in the IFS and DFG projects. Ex-ante economic impact assessment of the technologies is an integral part of the project proposal. Also as much as possible the work will be carried out by students as part of post-graduate degree related studies.

In a nutshell, the funding from IFS was a stepping stone in my career as a budding young scientist. Hopefully, if the latter project is funded, I will move from working only on a national scale to an international one.

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## 11. Conclusions and lessons learned

The science and technology infrastructure in Cameroon was steadily eroded during the 1990s. A nationwide economic crisis that began in the late 1980s caused the evaporation of national sources of research support, and drove researchers in Cameroon to greater dependence upon international sources of funding. The declines in the quantity of and incentives for research lead to a drop in the status of researchers in the public sphere and the scarcity of recruitment contributed to an ageing of the scientific community. This study finds that the lack of investment during the 1990s poses a threat to a sustainability of the Cameroonian S&T infrastructure and thereby seriously undermines one of the pillars of national development.

Nevertheless, the situation of the S&T community in Cameroon in 2003 was one of hope, with young researchers beginning to enter the system, and the persistence and strengthening of nodes of highly qualified senior researchers in key centres and departments. It is clear to the authors of this report that the rejuvenation of the Cameroonian S&T infrastructure must build upon these beginnings and continue to involve, first and foremost the government of Cameroon but also national and international partners and donors.

The questionnaire survey indicates that grantees in Cameroon are committed to science and strongly believe that science will be an important contributor to the development of Cameroon. Most grantees have a national scientific career as one of their goals, but they also indicate that they are not opposed to contributing to the development of Cameroon from abroad if the possibilities for pursuing a career in science in Cameroon do not improve.

### 11.1 Success and failure among applicants

Cameroonian applicants to IFS were successful in more than one of three cases. This rate of success

puts them among the most successful groups to apply for IFS support. The reasons for their success include excellent training, the existence of strong research nodes that have long-standing relationships with IFS, and an informal system of peer review of applications. For example, many of the Cameroonian scientists did their graduate and postgraduate studies at the University of Yaoundé, the quality of which is praised both in Cameroon and outside Cameroon. Furthermore, a research grant application submitted by a scientist in Cameroon is rarely sent to IFS directly. It is first peer-reviewed in Cameroon by colleagues who are most often former IFS grantees (and who are often part of the highly qualified research nodes mentioned above). This practice is most common among organic chemists and food scientists, and about one-half of the applications received from them have been approved for funding. This experience indicates that the strengthening of peer review mechanisms within formal and informal alumni groups or other capable networks could be successful strategy for increasing the success rate of applications to IFS.

While the quality of proposals received by IFS may be increased through national networks that provide peer review, the information available indicates that the quantity of applications received is linked to IFS activities in the country. For example, a high number of applications from Cameroon in 2000 (19 applications) followed upon visits and information seminars held at various institutions in 1999 in conjunction with the first phase of research for this impact report. This report concludes that there is no substitute for IFS events and staff travel to target countries to generate increases in the numbers of applications.

One group in Cameroon that does not apply to IFS in significant numbers is women. While relatively few women are active in science in Cameroon, the percentage of women scientists in the population of IFS grantees in Cameroon is half the percentage of women scientists in the population of scientists

in Cameroon. This indicates that IFS should further explore why women are not better represented. For example, do women researchers in Cameroon have more fragile networks of support, are they poorly represented in IFS fields or, due to commitments to family and children that delay their research careers, are they too old to qualify for IFS support? As IFS looks to expand its support to researchers in the poorest countries, women may be a group whose participation in the IFS small grants programme could be significantly increased. In order to see such an increase, IFS must obtain a better understanding of why women are poorly represented among applicants from some countries.

## 11.2 Research conditions

Researchers indicated that the present division of their labour as researchers between teaching, research, administration, and other activities was near ideal. One variation from this was that researchers at research institutes would like to become more involved with teaching.

Meanwhile, there was wide agreement among grantees on the nature of the primary limitations to research in Cameroon. Grantees cited a lack of equipment, materials and facilities for research as the leading problem. Lack of funds, few possibilities for equipment maintenance and repair, poor access to literature and bibliographic databases, limited access to the Internet, and scientific isolation were also key problems.

Cameroonian researchers were nearly unanimous in deploring researcher salaries. They generally agreed that they were unable to support their families on their income as a scientist, and most were either working as consultants, farmers or in private businesses, or else looking forward to such work in the future. IFS does not provide support to researchers for their cost of living except in the case that their research takes them away from their home institution. Nevertheless, IFS must remain aware of the difficulties that researchers encounter in supporting themselves and their families, for, as salaries stagnate and decrease, these adversities affect the amount of time that researchers can afford to devote to their scientific work.

Information regarding researchers' funding sources indicates that they are heavily dependent upon

foreign sources of funding to carry out their work. The open nature of the IFS programme does not impose strict limitations on the topic or nature of grantees' research, but this may not be the case for all foreign donors. Future research might explore the extent to which individual researchers and research teams are free to determine their own research agenda.

## 11.3 Communication and team research

As would be expected, grantees communicated most often with colleagues in their own department regarding their research. Meanwhile, grantees more frequently communicated with researchers in Europe than they did with their colleagues in Cameroon (but outside their department). The large majority of grantees communicated with other researchers in Africa (but outside Cameroon) only annually or less frequently. This demonstrates a concrete lack of South-South communication and research cooperation both nationally and regionally.

Though a large share of IFS travel support to grantees in Cameroon has gone towards fostering South-South communication, IFS could probably do more in this regard. Grantees find other sources of funding to visit Europe and to attend conferences in Cameroon, but sources of support to attend events in Africa, Asia or Latin America are meagre. IFS could both create a niche for itself in travel support and be a leader in supporting South-South cooperation by focusing more of its efforts towards facilitating South-South communication and cooperation.

IFS provides incentives in the form of research grants to individual scientists while recognising that through collaboration scientists generally achieve their best results. Grantees' patterns of collaboration suggest that the individual nature of the IFS grant does not hinder scientists from working in teams. For example, more than four-fifths of the journal articles that grantees gave credit to IFS for supporting were the result of team research. At the same time, IFS has succeeded in identifying individuals at an early stage in their career that remain productive members of their scientific community long after the IFS research grant has been exhausted.

## 11.4 Incentives

In a context where salaries are insufficient and grantees must carefully weigh the advantages of carrying out essentially unpaid research work against earning income through consultancies and other extra jobs, IFS must increase the incentives for grantees to submit final reports and publicise their research results. IFS is doing so through two new initiatives, mentorship support to increase grantee capacity in these areas and travel support linked to the successful completion of research projects. The success of these initiatives should be the subject of a future impact assessment or external evaluation.

## 11.5 The brain drain

Capacity for the production and utilisation of scientific knowledge is one of the many prerequisites for local and regional development. Hence, one of the primary goals of IFS is to reduce the brain drain by providing incentives and means for scientists to remain in their country and to contribute to the building of a critical mass of scientific expertise. It is a measure of the success of the IFS programme in meeting this goal that out of 84 grantees in Cameroon, only three have left Africa. An additional four grantees have left Cameroon, but are part of a continental circulation of scientists that are contributing to the science capacity of the continent. Interviews conducted indicated that some of them will eventually come back (and as of October 2003 one already has).

## 11.6 Grantees' assessment of IFS

Grantees' responses indicate that the importance of IFS in the research community is growing in Cameroon as the local infrastructure deteriorates. The percentage of grantees with projects that could not be carried out without IFS support has risen from levels similar to those found in Mexico (Gaillard et al 2001) to levels that are greater than the average for all of Africa (Gaillard and F Tullberg, 2000). While dependency on IFS in this respect has not yet equalled the levels reported for Tanzania (Gaillard, Zink and F Tullberg, 2001), they indicate that Cameroon is a country where the need for IFS support is great.

Areas where grantees have been critical of IFS support are assistance in the publication of their research results and follow-up activities once IFS support is terminated. Here grantees have correctly identified areas where IFS has traditionally been weak. Furthermore, they have also identified areas that can be crucial to the success of grantees in the long-term. IFS expects that its recently initiated mentorship programme together with a travel grants policy that rewards grantees for publicising their research results will address the concerns of grantees with respect to publication support. Follow-up activities upon the conclusion of IFS support could be strengthened through the establishment of IFS alumni networks that facilitate grantee communication and collaboration after formal IFS support expires. Such networks could also be important sources of support for researchers wishing to apply to IFS if they were to provide a peer-review service. One such association of former and present IFS grantees is being established in Yaoundé.

Areas of mixed success included providing access to literature, supporting the maintenance of research equipment, providing access to further research training, providing scientific counselling, and providing additional networking opportunities. While the rates of approval for these categories are considered good by the IFS secretariat, they are at the same time striving to improve them through a number of initiatives and workshops (e.g. a literature search service, mentorship support, service and maintenance workshops and network support).

IFS received the most positive assessments for its core activity: the manner in which it administers its research grants. A majority of respondents graded the IFS as excellent in this regard and all respondents were at least satisfied. The IFS selection process, the service whereby IFS purchases and ships research equipment, monitoring and follow-up of research projects, and contact with the IFS staff also received high marks from grantees in Cameroon.

In conclusion, the grantee evaluations of the IFS programme indicate that IFS support in Cameroon is well-targeted to ameliorate the most significant limiting factors to research. Furthermore, it has significantly contributed to enhancing the research environment of many scientists in Cameroon to the extent that most of them are still active in their national scientific community today.

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## Appendix 1: The questionnaire

### Questionnaire for IFS Grantees in Africa

N° .....  
(leave blank)

This questionnaire is intended for all IFS grantees. Even those grant recipients no longer receiving support from the Foundation for their research work are invited to participate in this survey.

To answer, use the space provided, or circle the relevant number (1, 2, 3 ...).

#### I Civil status, education and mobility

1. Family name: _____ Middle name: _____ First name: _____ (underline the name under which you publish)	2. Name and address of your home institution: _____ _____ _____
3. E-mail address: _____	
4. Citizenship: _____	5. Sex: __ male __ female
6. Year of birth: 19 ____	7. Civil status: __ single __ married __ widowed
8. How many children do you have?	9. If you are married, what is your spouse's principal occupation?

#### 10. Academic degrees obtained

Degrees	Area of specialisation	Year degree awarded	Educational establishment	Fellowship/study grant obtained from
BSc/Licence				
MSc/Maîtrise/Ingénieur				
PhD/thèse de 3ème cycle/ Docteur Ingénieur				
Post-Doc/Doctorat d'Etat				

#### 11. List your academic visits abroad (stay of at least 2 months) since you were awarded your highest degree

Year	Institution	Country	Duration (x months)

12. How many years have you spent outside your country for higher education and training, including postdoctoral studies and academic visits abroad? \_\_\_\_\_ years

13. How many years in total have you spent abroad? \_\_\_\_\_ years

## II Career

14. List all the positions you have held since the beginning of your career

Position	Employing institution	Country	Starting date	% of re-search time

15. In your present position give the approximate amount of time devoted to the different activities listed below and indicate in the second column what, according to you, it should ideally be.

Activities	Present %	Ideal %
Teaching		
Research		
Administration		
Extension		
Consultancy		
Other (specify)		

16. Do you consider that the salary you receive as a scientist is adequate to support you and, if applicable, your family?      \_\_adequate      \_\_Inadequate

17. How many times higher than the minimum salary in your country is your salary as a scientist/teacher ? \_\_\_\_\_ times more

18. In which institutional framework do you work today?

- Public University       Private University  
 Public Institute       Private Institute  
 Non Governmental Organization (NGO)  
 Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Given the institutional framework in which you work, would you consider the following elements as relative advantages or disadvantages ?

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Salary scale	—	—
Career development	—	—
Job security	—	—
Social benefits	—	—
Retirement	—	—
Others (specify) _____	—	—



20. If you have extra jobs to supplement your income and, if applicable, your family, indicate how many additional hours you spend working per week. \_\_\_\_\_ hours
21. If you have extra jobs, how many times more income do they provide you with in comparison to your basic salary as a scientist ? \_\_\_\_\_ times more
22. Specify the nature of your extra jobs

<u>Teaching</u>	<u>Farming</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Own consultancy or medical private practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Somebody else's consultancy or medical private practice
<input type="checkbox"/> Own private business	<input type="checkbox"/> Somebody else's business
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	

23. Compare your total family income with your salary as a scientist/teacher or and, if applicable, indicate how many times more it corresponds to: \_\_\_\_\_ times more
24. Have you been offered employment abroad?       Yes    No
- If yes, in which country (ies)? \_\_\_\_\_
- Did you accept the offer(s)?                       Yes    No

### III Research Choice and perception of research

25. Since the beginning of your research career, have you substantially changed your scientific orientation/research subjects?                      Yes                       No
26. What is your main field of science at present, e.g., agronomy, zoology, parasitology, etc.?  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. To carry out your research activities, do you usually work alone or with other scientists?  
 Alone    With other scientists
28. Whenever you work with other scientists do you usually work in monodisciplinary or multidisciplinary research teams ?     monodisciplinary     multidisciplinary
29. How often do you communicate with the following people regarding your research? (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = annually, 4 = monthly, 5 = more often.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists in your department
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists from other institutions in your country
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists in other African countries
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists in Europe
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists in USA or Canada
- 1 2 3 4 5 Scientists in Asia or Latin America
- 1 2 3 4 5 Funding agencies
- 1 2 3 4 5 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- 1 2 3 4 5 Private clients
- 1 2 3 4 5 Consultancy groups
- 1 2 3 4 5 Extension staff
- 1 2 3 4 5 Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

30. Indicate whether you agree with the following assertions by circling a number from 1 = “disagree completely” to 5 = “agree completely”.

- 1 2 3 4 5 Science is public knowledge  
 1 2 3 4 5 Scientific knowledge is universal  
 1 2 3 4 5 Science contributes to development  
 1 2 3 4 5 Science should firstly produce knowledge  
 1 2 3 4 5 Science should mainly lead to useful innovations  
 1 2 3 4 5 Researchers are free to choose their own research topics  
 1 2 3 4 5 Research topics are set by sponsors  
 1 2 3 4 5 Research topics are set by employers  
 1 2 3 4 5 Research problems are set by clients  
 1 2 3 4 5 Researchers should produce goods for a competitive market  
 1 2 3 4 5 Researchers should have entrepreneurial and managerial skills

#### IV Access to scientific literature and attendance of conferences

31. Do you have easy access to the Internet? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
 32. Do you have access to bibliographic databases? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No  
 If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 33. How many scientific conferences have you attended since the beginning of your research career?

Conferences	With national support	With IFS support	With foreign support**	no support
Within your country				
In Africa*				
In Europe				
In USA or Canada				
In Latin America & Caribbean				
In Asia				

\*Except your own country

\*\*Except IFS

34. How many scientific conferences have you attended outside your country during the last five years? \_\_\_\_\_ conferences

#### V Main Factors holding back your research work and evaluation

35. What are, according to you, the three main factors holding back your research work in order of importance?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_

36. Certain recurring difficulties have been listed below. Indicate by circling the relevant number (1, 2, 3, 4) whether they are 1 = insignificant, 2 = tolerable, 3 = serious, or 4 = obstructive, according to you, in your research work.

1 2 3 4	Access to equipment	Lack of technician(s)	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Purchasing equipment	Field work difficulties	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Equipment repairs	Access to vehicle	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Access to supplies	Access to scientific documentation	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Lack of time	Data processing	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Others (specify) _____		

37. How do you perceive your government’s attitude toward research? Indicate the attitude by circling one number between “very negative” (1) and “very positive” (7).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



## VII Relative importance of IFS support and future research goal

44. Would you have pursued your research if IFS funding had not been made available?

- Yes, other support would have been available                       Yes, but on a reduced scale  
 Yes, but in a substantially different form                                       No  
 Yes, even without other support     Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

45. Since becoming an IFS grantee, has it become easier for you to obtain:

- |   | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Additional funding from your institution               | —   | —  |
| 2. Additional funding from a national funding institution | —   | —  |
| 3. Additional funding from an international institution   | —   | —  |
- If yes to 3, give name \_\_\_\_\_

46. After receiving support from IFS, did it become easier for you to obtain scientific and technical assistance from your institution?

Yes  No

47. Has the IFS support provided opportunities to collaborate with new partners ?

Yes  No

48. Whenever applicable, did you continue to collaborate with them once the support was terminated ?

Yes  No                      ? Not applicable

49. How would you assess the IFS mode of work and support to your research work ? (1 = unacceptable, 2 = poor, 3 = satisfactory , 4 = good and 5 = excellent)

- 1 2 3 4 5 Selection process  
 1 2 3 4 5 Grant administration (including transfer of funds)  
 1 2 3 4 5 Monitoring and follow-up of projects  
 1 2 3 4 5 Contacts with IFS staff  
 1 2 3 4 5 Purchase of research equipment  
 1 2 3 4 5 Maintenance of research equipment  
 1 2 3 4 5 Access to literature  
 1 2 3 4 5 Research training  
 1 2 3 4 5 Scientific counselling  
 1 2 3 4 5 IFS organized workshops  
 1 2 3 4 5 Networking activities  
 1 2 3 4 5 Assistance in the publication of your research results  
 1 2 3 4 5 Follow up activities once the supported project is terminated  
 1 2 3 4 5 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

50. What is your future career goal?

<input type="checkbox"/> National scientific career	<input type="checkbox"/> Career in administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Career in politics	<input type="checkbox"/> Private business
<input type="checkbox"/> Own consultancy or medical practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Career within national development programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Career within foreign or international organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____

Thank you for your co-operation. Please return the completed questionnaire together with a complete list of publications (articles, books, papers in proceedings, reports, etc...) in the original language of publication, including names of co-authors, full titles of articles, books, papers, scientific journals, volume(s), first and last pages, date of publication, etc..., and **mark with an asterisk in the margin the ones which are directly derived from IFS support.**

## Appendix 2: List of Figures

Figure 1	Top recipient countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (1974-2002)	7
Figure 2	Budget of IRA and IRZV in millions FCFA (1976-1986)	14
Figure 3	Number of students in public higher education from 1990 to 2000	16
Figure 4	Budget of the IRA and IRZV in millions of CFAF (1986-1993)	16
Figure 5	Budgets of the universities of Yaoundé I and II (1991 to 1999)	17
Figure 6	Mean budget per student in the public universities in Cameroon in millions CFAF	17
Figure 7	Grantees by research area	28
Figure 8	Time allocation of work activities in research institutes	34
Figure 9	Time allocations of work activities in public universities	34
Figure 10	Factors most limiting grantees' research in Cameroon	34
Figure 11	Obstructiveness of specific difficulties to grantees in their researcher (part 1)	36
Figure 12	Obstructiveness of specific difficulties to grantees in their researcher (part 2)	36
Figure 13	Annual prod of ISI indexed publications by four African countries(1987-2001)	40
Figure 14	Average yearly publ. output in relation to the time of the award of the first grant	41
Figure 15	Cameroonian scientists and international collaboration	43
Figure 16	Academic progression of IFS grantees	47
Figure 17	Importance of criteria for the promotion of scientists in Cameroon (part 1)	48
Figure 18	Importance of criteria for the promotion of scientists in Cameroon (part 2)	49
Figure 19	Years spent outside Cameroon for higher education and training	49
Figure 20	Importance of IFS support to grantees research: before and after 1992	51
Figure 21	Grantees' mean assessment of the IFS mode of work and support	53

## Appendix 3: List of Tables

Table 1	Top recipient institutions in Cameroon (1974-2002)	9
Table A	Highest degrees held by researchers at IRAD and University of Yaoundé I	18
Table B	Countries in which IRAD scientists obtained their highest degrees	19
Table C	Age of scientists at IRAD and University of Yaoundé I (Faculty of sciences only)	19
Table 2	Researcher salaries (in CFA francs)	20
Table 3	Number of applications and first grants by year (1993-2002)	27
Table 4	Number of first applications and first grants per research area (1998S-2002S)	28
Table 5	Distribution of applications and first grants according to institution (1998S-2002S)	28
Table 6	Grantees in Cameroon: number of grantees by Research Area, period, and status	29
Table 7	Distribution of grantees by city	29
Table 8	Degree held at the time of the first grant	31
Table 9	Countries where Cameroonian IFS grantees have been awarded degrees	32
Table 10	Institutions that host grantees' scientific careers	33
Table 11	Types of extra jobs held by grantees	33
Table 12	Grantees' evaluations of the advantages and disadvantages to working as a scientist in Cameroon	33
Table 13	Scientific and professional communication	37
Table 14	Conferences attended by responding grantees, grouped by source of funding and location of conference	37
Table 15	Number of conferences outside Cameroon attended by respondents during a five year period (1995-1999)	38
Table 16	Publication productivity of individual grantees	41
Table 17	IFS supported publications and total publications by type	42
Table 18	Journals in which there have appeared five or more articles by IFS grantees in Cameroon	43
Table 19	Number of research grants awarded to individual grantees in Cameroon	45
Table 20	Closed files in Cameroon	46
Table 21	Quality of final reports received from grantees in Cameroon	46
Table 22	Grantee assessments of the IFS mode of work and support	53
Table 23	Grantee responses to eleven value statements	55
Table 24	Future career goals of IFS grantees in Cameroon	55

## Appendix 4: List of Boxes

Box 1	Workshops organised by IFS in Cameroon	8
Box 2	Creation of the first Cameroonian research institutes	12
Box 3	The science policy institutionalisation process and the creation of ONAREST	12
Box 4	The reorganisation of ONAREST in five research institutes	13
Box 5	The changing research community in Cameroon, 1965-1987	15
Box 6	The shrinking of a highly qualified research community: examples	18
Box 7	The University Research Grant Scheme, <i>Le Fonds Universitaire d'Appui à la Recherche</i> (FUAR)	23
Box 8	Closing a file	46
Box 9	IFS grantees: science leaders	47
Box 10	The brain drain or regional circulation	50
Box 11	Scientific research capacity in Cameroon and IFS : a grantee's view-point	52
Box 12	The role of IFS support in my research career	56

## Appendix 5: Acronyms and abbreviations

CCCE	Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
CFAf	Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CRBP	Centre Régional Bananiers et Plantains
DEA	Diplôm d'Etudes Approfondies
DFG	German Research Council
DFID	Department for International Development
DGRST	Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique
ENSA	Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie
EUR	Euros
FAC	Fonds d'Aide à la Coopération
FASA	Faculté d'Agronomie et des Sciences Agricoles
FASA	Faculté d'Agronomie et des Sciences Agricoles
FF	French francs
FUAR	Fonds Universitaire d'appui à la recherche
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERDAT (now CIRAD)	Groupement d'Etude et de Recherche pour le Développement de l'Agronomie Tropicale
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IFS	International Foundation for Science
IMPM	Institut de Recherches Médicales et d'Etudes des Plantes Médicinales
INADER	Institut National de Développement Rural
INADER	Institut National de Développement Rural
INCO-DEV	The Research for Development programme within the International Co-operation programme of the European Union
INFU	Institute of Environmental Research at the University of Dortmund
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRA	Institut de Recherche Agricole
IRAD	Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
IRHO	Institut de Recherche sur les Huiles et Oléagineux
IRZV	Institut de Recherches Zootechniques et Vétérinaires
ISI	Institute for Scientific Information
ISP	International Science Programme
JUST	Journées Universitaires pour la Science et la Technologie
MESIA	Monitoring and Evaluation System for Impact Assessment



NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA (now DFID)	Overseas Development Administration
ONAREST	National Office for Scientific Research and Technology
ORSTOM (now IRD)	Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre Mer
S&T	Science and technology
SCI	Science Citation Index
Sida-SAREC	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Department for Research Cooperation
SLU	Swedish Agricultural University
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNU/IAS	United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollars



## IFS MESIA Impact Studies

- Report No. 1      *Monitoring and Evaluation System for Impact Assessment (MESIA),  
Conceptual Framework and Guidelines*  
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- Report No. 4      *Strengthening Science Capacity in Tanzania:  
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- Report No. 5      *Science Research Capacity in Cameroon:  
An Assessment of IFS Support*  
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